

HORSES, GUNS AND DOGS

BY
J. OTHO PAGET
GEO. A. B. DEWAR · A. JINNES SHAND



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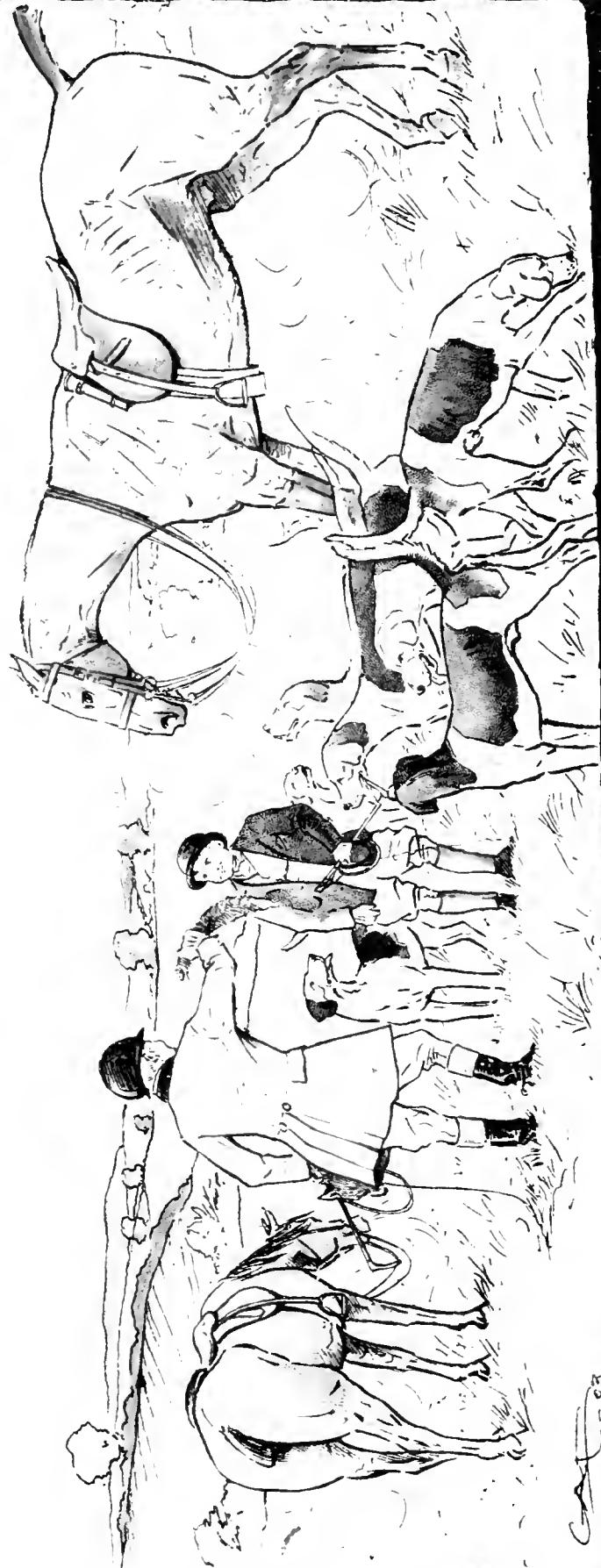
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HORSES, GUNS, AND
DOGS

AND BEHOLD, YOUNG BLOODED.

Gant



BY

J. OTHO PAGET, GEORGE A. B. DEWAR
A. B. PORTMAN, AND A. INNES SHAND

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P A R T I.—H O R S E S

By J. OTHO PAGET

A



MORE YOUNG NERVES HAVE BEEN RUINED BY
THE STABLED PONY THAN ANYTHING ELSE

CHAPTER I

FOOD, PHYSIC, AND EXERCISE

THE boy who wants to ride and own horses eventually should know all about them. The engineer who hopes to get to the head of his profession has to pass through the drudgery of the workshop before he can rise to a higher plane. The smallest detail and the ordinary routine of any business or pleasure ought to be at the finger-ends of the man who wishes to become the real and not the nominal controller of the people he employs. These truisms are so well known that it may seem

unnecessary to set them down here, but it is as well to impress them on your memory, as we are all rather inclined to fly before we can walk.

If your parents can afford to keep horses, they can probably also afford to pay men to look after them, and therefore the whole of your holidays need not be spent in the stable. You can, however, get a rudimentary idea of the way things should be done if you ask your father's head man to give you a little instruction—how to groom a pony, how to put a saddle and bridle on, &c., for there is a knack in performing these operations. If you are born to wealth, you may not be obliged to saddle a horse more than two or three times in your life, but, when the occasion does come, you would like to be able to do it properly. Knowledge of all kinds is always worth acquiring, and you can never tell when it will be useful. Take the head of the bridle in the right hand, the bit in the palm of the left, then slip your thumb in the corner of the horse's mouth, when you will find he will open it, and the thing is done.

When you take your pony out yourself, you should make a practice of trying all four feet to see if any shoes are loose, and if there are any clinches up that he might possibly cut himself with. The clinches are the ends of the nails that have been hammered down, but which work up as the shoe wears thin.

The boy who is fortunate enough to live in the country should not aspire to a stabled pony until

he has become a fairly proficient rider. The pony that lives in a stable and is corn fed, is apt to develop tricks which are disconcerting to the inexperienced youthful horseman, and it is all-important to the beginner to have full confidence in himself. Confidence is the first thing to be acquired, and anything to shake it is liable to injure the nerves.

A feed of corn the day he is ridden is quite enough to keep a pony in good heart at grass, and more young nerves have been ruined by the stabled pony than anything else. This is a picture of what frequently occurs. Master George comes home for the summer holidays, and his pony, who has been at grass, is brought up. For the first week or two he rides regularly, and then there is a cricket match to be played, or something more exciting than a lonely ride. Meanwhile the pony, who was rapidly becoming fit, has the same allowance of corn as a sixteen-hand horse and little or no exercise. No groom would ever think it necessary regularly to exercise a pony. The day comes when Master George wants to ride again, and John is told to saddle the pony. There is a little prancing about at the start, but except that George thinks his pony's back feels higher than usual, all goes well until they reach a strip of grass. George decides to have a canter, and digs in his heels. The next minute the green grass rises up to meet him, and then he finds it hitting him hard in the back. He has only been kicked off,

but it is a very unpleasant sensation, and very bad for the nerves.

The winter holidays are of course different, and two days a week hunting will be sufficient to keep any pony exercised, but in the summer no boy likes to be forced to ride every day—it is too much like the regular routine of school.

I do not, however, advise the boy who is only learning to ride to begin hunting at once, as a pony may be the quietest beast on ordinary occasions and yet, directly he hears hounds, develop an unexpected and uncomfortable fire.

The nerves of a boy are very sensitive, and the more highly strung they are, the more liable they are to feel the impression of any shock. The gradual growth of manhood's vigour will strengthen them, and the nervous lad is most likely to become the man with iron nerve. Despair not therefore, parent, because your son appears timid at the start ; it is not funk, but merely a feeling of insecurity in the saddle which begets a want of confidence. The boy who gets on to the back of a pony with fear and trembling, will cheerfully stand up to a bigger boy than himself and take a hiding like a man. For some reason girls suffer much less than boys from nerves, and it is only in later life they know the curse.

Good nerves are absolutely indispensable to the man who wishes to ride well or to be really successful in anything he undertakes. It means the presence of mind to act on emergencies with

quickness and decision. The man with weak nerves does not fail from want of courage, but the shock of an unexpected situation deadens his brain and makes him incapable of acting at the moment. You must forgive me for dwelling on this subject, but it is so all-important to you now that I feel there is ample excuse for a lecture.

Nerve is, in the first place, a question of health. Don't begin smoking too early, and, when you do begin, smoke in moderation. You may not feel any immediate ill effects from the free indulgence of the cigarette or pipe, but you are handicapping yourself in the race to a vigorous manhood. The pipe is better than the cigarette, but, if you prefer the latter, limit yourself to a certain number in the week, and don't exceed it. Of course boys would be all the better if they never touched tobacco till they were eighteen ; but if a boy wants to smoke he will, and it is better to do it with the full knowledge of his father than in secret. Fathers forget that they were boys once, and sons don't realise that in the course of time they will become men.

Strong tea is another luxury that is responsible for the ruin of nerves, both young and old. Of course every one knows that the man who takes too much wine or spirits is certain to lose his nerve, but boys are seldom guilty of this failing, though they should remember it is a taste that grows with age, and should therefore put the curb on before it takes hold of them. I can't do better than advise you to be moderate in everything.

Forget you are a boy, and remember only that you are the coming man. Young England to-day is the father of England's future. Fresh air and moderate living, with the fair exercise of brain and muscle, will help you to attain a perfect manhood.

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There is very little pleasure in owning horses if the control of the stable is in the hands of the groom, and the knowledge you acquire as a boy will help you in later life to rule your establishment. Make your own observations and use common sense. What we call common sense is, in my opinion, the most valuable gift that a horse-owner can have. A slavish adherence to old-fashioned methods is the stumbling-block over which nearly all grooms fall.

We are told, and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement, that a horse's stomach is very small in comparison with the size of the animal. Now I think this is a fact which we should always keep before us. The first thing it suggests is that food should be supplied in small quantities and at frequent intervals. If a horse will not eat the amount you wish him to have when given four times a day, let the same quantity be divided into six feeds, but never give him more corn than he will finish. There is an idea that horses doing fast work require very little hay, and it may be necessary to limit the amount given to a very gross

feeder, but an animal with an average appetite will seldom eat more than is good for him. The rack should be kept filled with fresh hay, and any that is left must be removed. Each grain of oats that comes out of the same stack is practically of equal quality, but with hay this is not the case. If you watch horses grazing in a field you will notice they will pick blades here and there, wandering over the entire field in search of choice bits, though to you all may appear the same.

Now the hay we have stacked ready for use in the stable has come from a similar field, and is generally composed of different grasses, some of which are agreeable to a horse's taste and some not. Then also portions of the stack vary considerably in quality, due either to the process of making or to the weather at the time of stacking, or perhaps to the manure that had been previously applied to the field. A horse should therefore be allowed to select those bits which he prefers in the same manner as when he is at grass, and not be forced to clean up the whole rack. This may appear to you an extravagant method, but, if you want to get the best results from a horse, you must not try to economise with his food. Of course when he is hungry he will eat anything, and the armful of hay which he picked over at first he may eventually consume when there is no prospect of getting anything better, but the question is, will it do him any good? In racing stables it may be necessary to limit the quantity of hay, but for hunting and

ordinary work it is foolish to ruin a horse's constitution in the hope of gaining a little speed. The stomach requires a certain amount of bulky food, and, if nothing but corn is given, the health of the animal must eventually suffer.

Unless a full bucket is always kept in the stable, water should be given before feeding. This is a rule to which there is no exception. The amount of corn given should be regulated by the work the horse does, and there is no doubt that most of the troubles of large stables come from a too full supply of oats with insufficient exercise. Beans should be given sparingly, and not at all to young horses.

This work is not one about fox-hunting, but I cannot get out of my mind that the "sport of kings" is the ultimate end for which you are learning to ride. To my mind, riding along a road is a very tame amusement, and riding to hounds is the greatest pleasure in life. I shall therefore take it for granted that in reading these pages you are seeking for information that will assist you in embarking on the hunting-field.

Continuing the subject of feeding, and the remarks already made on the size of a horse's stomach, I should impress on you that it is the long day without food which makes it impossible to ride a hunter more than twice a week. A horse that is watered and fed at frequent intervals will travel sixty miles a day for a week or more, getting big and strong on the work, of course only at a

slow pace, say about six miles an hour. Pace and want of food must eventually wear out the stoutest beast that ever looked through a bridle.

Condition is a very important thing in a hunter, and the muscle that is to carry you through a long run cannot be built up in a day. I am a great advocate for keeping horses in as natural a state as possible, but then we must remember that we ask them to do more than ever would be required of them in their natural wild life. The wild horse in the most favourable country would eventually succumb to one that had been corn fed. What we have to do is to increase the animal's muscular development by judicious exercise, with hard corn, and at the same time to keep his digestive apparatus in working order.

Farmers are, I imagine, the largest class of breeders of hunters or ordinary horses, and with few exceptions they cannot afford to give them corn. The consequence of this is, a young horse straight from their hands hardly knows the taste of oats, and his stomach is therefore not accustomed to such strong food. You buy one of these young horses, and your groom begins immediately to stuff him with a full allowance of old oats. The result of this is humour and several other complaints, because the digestive organs have not been allowed time to accustom themselves to this new food. Nature is a very obliging servant when treated properly, and is often ready to adapt herself to altered conditions, but she will not be

hurried. Grooms also forget that young horses, that have never before had physic, do not require such a large dose as old stagers who have been stabled for years.

Unless your groom is very clever and experienced, never allow him to give physic without your order or that of the veterinary surgeons. The latter are much too fond of giving medicine and, like old-fashioned doctors, will prescribe a strong dose before they even know what is the matter. Aloes, I admit, are a very useful purgative, but I am quite certain they weaken the stomach, and the more frequently they are given the more frequently will they be wanted.

A horse in hard work will be all the better for a little alterative medicine once a fortnight, but I know nothing cheaper or better than the old prescription of a teaspoon of sulphur and a tablespoon of saltpetre. A lump of rock-salt in the rack is a good thing.

The question of summering hunters has been frequently debated without any satisfactory conclusion having been reached. I am quite certain that putting a horse into a loose-box and leaving him there without any exercise for two or three months is bad. This plan answers well sometimes, with a plentiful supply of green food and a small allowance of corn, in getting the legs fine—a very desirable end if you are a dealer, but I am supposing that the animal you summer is to do hard work in the winter. The horse that has been walking about all the summer without any weight on

his back will be more likely to stand work than one that has spent his time in the stable; the latter may look all right at first, but a few days' hunting will find out his weak spots.

Keeping horses in the stable and giving them regular walking exercise is the only alternative to turning out to grass. I prefer turning out: it is more natural and certainly cheaper. The shoes should be taken off, the feet pared and rasped every three weeks. A big roomy pasture with some shade and a feed of crushed beans twice a day will keep the muscle on. It is all the better if there is not too much grass, as the horse then is kept walking about all day to get his fill, whereas when the grass is too luxurious he soon eats as much as he requires, and will gallop about or get into mischief. Don't run your horses too thickly; one to every ten acres is sufficient; and let cattle clear up the rest of the herbage. The time when they require a full bite is in the spring when first turned out, and the fresh young grass is then the best natural physic.

Your groom will probably tell you that a horse at grass gallops about and knocks his legs to pieces. You can reply that it is better to find out any weakness in the summer than in the middle of the hunting season, and that, if a horse cannot stand galloping with no weight on his back, he is not likely to carry you to hounds.

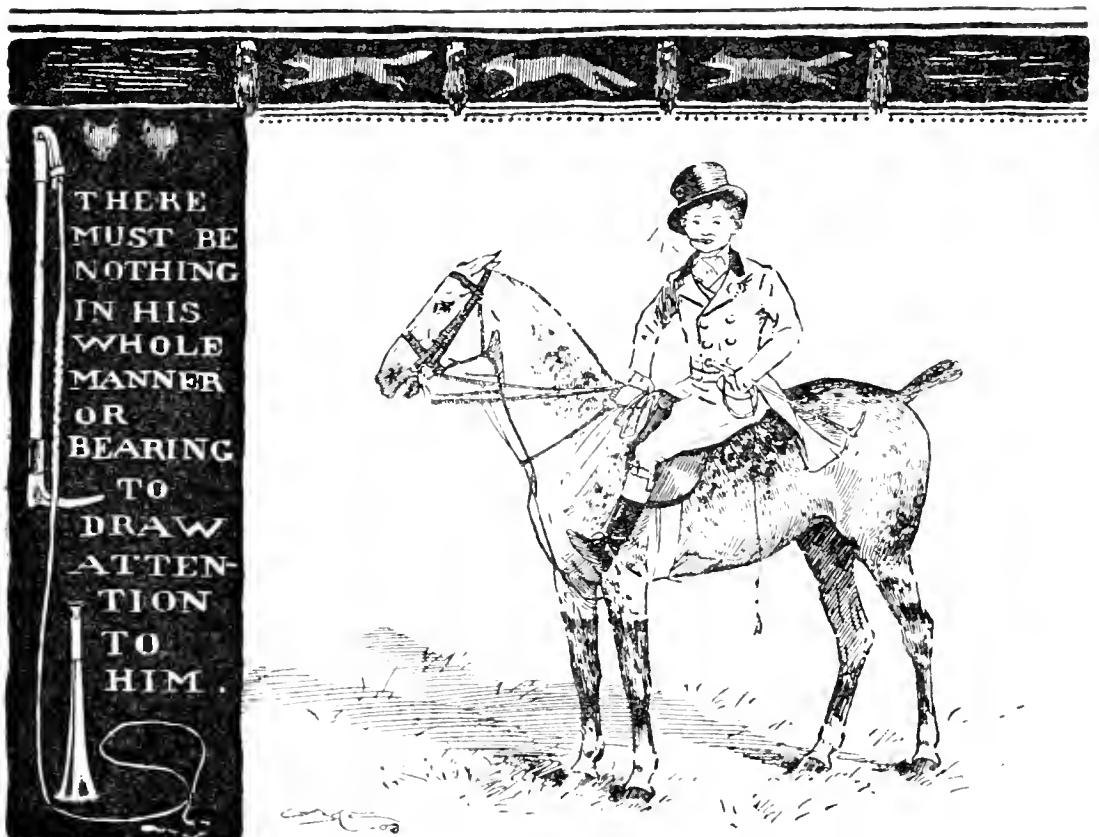
The general custom with horses that have been turned out is to give them a dose of physic when

they come up. This means at least five days in the stable without exercise, which must be bad for an animal which has been accustomed to walking at least eighteen hours out of the twenty-four. If you are going to physic them, give it out at grass; but I think myself it is quite unnecessary. A horse that has been at grass, and has had no corn, would certainly require some medicine to prepare his stomach for the change of food; but one that has had beans regularly does not require it. If there is a shed in the field, it is a good plan to put some hay in the rack for the last month; the horse will eat a little, and it will be preparing him gradually for the coming change.

When you get your hunters up from grass, they should be shod the same day and taken out, being exercised the next. I am afraid you will not get your groom to do it; but horses would be all the better if they were exercised twice a day, and then two hours at a time would be quite sufficient. The danger with riding horses fresh from grass is that their backs are liable to get sore; but by riding and leading them alternately the risk is minimised. A good plan for hardening the back is to wash under the saddle with strong salt and water, directly they come in, whilst the skin is hot.

The mistake that is generally made is treating a horse that has been corn fed at grass as if he had done no work at all, whereas he has probably done more trotting and galloping than one that has been regularly exercised. The consequence

is a horse is often less fit after a fortnight in the stable than the day he came out of the field. Some grooms give nothing but walking exercise, and others believe solely in a slow trot; but the best method is a combination of the two, varied by plenty of slow cantering work. The horse that gets his four hours of slow trotting every morning is bored and weary of life before the season commences. Hunters should never be trotted fast, as there is nothing worse for legs and feet. A slow canter and an occasional sharp sprint of two or three furlongs will prepare a horse for anything he will be asked to do in the hunting-field.



CHAPTER II

FIRST RIDING LESSONS : AND THE HUNTING FIELD

HORSEMANSHIP is a combination of hands and seat, strengthened by nerve. It cannot be learnt by reading a book, and must be acquired by practice. Good nerve, I have already said, is merely a question of health.

There are some people who lack that delicate, sympathetic touch in the fingers which goes to make first-class "hands"; but, though they can never know the magnetic feeling which should exist between horse and rider, they may with care avoid

torturing the animal they ride. This, like everything else, may be learnt much easier in early life, and a boy should never allow himself to get into the habit of hanging on by the reins. The first thing is to remember that a horse's mouth is both delicate and sensitive, to be made hard and callous only by our bad usage. If a boy by a stretch of imagination will think that the reins are made of thread, and that a hard pull will break them, he will get into the way of touching them lightly. When you are first learning to ride, your natural instinct prompts you to clutch at anything that may preserve your balance, and the reins in your hand will of course come first. This is what you must avoid. Never use the reins for that purpose, but rather hold on to the pommel if your equilibrium is threatened.

I should always advise a boy to use a snaffle bridle, and parents should never provide a pony that cannot be ridden in that bit. I would even go further, and say that no man ought to be allowed to use a curb bridle unless he has fairly good hands. The curb, which to an accomplished horseman is an assistance in the higher art of equestrianism, is, in the grasp of the heavy-fisted, an instrument of torture to the animal he rides. The bars are the sensitive part of the horse's mouth, and the use of the curb is to bring the head down, so that the bit falls on those bars. Now the poor animal's only protection against heavy hands is to get the bit in the corner of the mouth, where there is

little or no feeling, and the bad rider can hang on there without doing much damage. If, however, the curb is used, the bit is brought to bear on the sensitive bars, when the poor beast is driven mad with pain and discomfort. Horses that run away, or are always throwing up their heads, have usually been driven to these habits by bad hands.

There is a general idea that delicate handling is not necessary when a snaffle bridle is used, but this is a mistake. The plain snaffle bit should always be the chief medium for conveying your wishes to the horse, and the curb should be looked on as an assistant only. A curb is also of use in balancing a horse, but that is a proceeding which the beginner had better not worry himself about. No horse can be considered perfect unless he is well balanced, and one which is built that way will never be a hard puller. A good horseman can, by a delicate manipulation of the reins, give a horse an artificial balance, whereas the same animal, in the hands of a bad rider, would be galloping with the whole weight of his body thrown on to his shoulders.

You may liken a horse to a steel rod which, when it is bent in curves, develops a great springing power. The curb makes the horse bend his head and bring his hocks underneath him, when the steel rod may be said to have become a spring. In this position a horse is capable of exerting his greatest power for jumping. You will also understand that your weight will make a considerable

difference in the working of the spring, and much will depend on the position of the weight. These are, however, some of the more intricate points of the riding art which the beginner need not trouble himself with ; but I want you to appreciate the fact that sticking to the saddle and riding over a fence does not constitute a first-class horseman.

The boy who is learning to ride must above all things avoid getting into some bad trick or habit, as once such is acquired it is very difficult to throw off. He must cultivate a quiet neatness in dress, and there must be nothing in his whole manner or bearing to draw attention to him. A very ugly trick, which some men and many women have, is resting the hand on the hip and sticking out the elbow. Sit straight up in your saddle, don't round your shoulders, and keep your hands as low as you can get them, with your elbows close to your side. The legs should hang straight from the knee, and the heels slightly down. The body, above the waist, should bend freely and easily with every movement of the horse, while, below the waist, it should be firm and immovable. This is, I think, the whole secret of riding, and embodies the principle of it in a nutshell. Allow me therefore to repeat—be pliant in your body and stiff in your legs.

In riding at a fence, lean forward as your horse rises and lean back as he lands ; but this will come more naturally to you after a time. At the moment of landing your weight should be as far back as

possible ; because, if the horse makes a slight mistake, you are not so liable to come off, and also because, with your weight off his shoulders, the animal can more easily recover.

Most steeplechasing experts ride with the feet home in the stirrups, but for hunting and ordinary riding the ball of the foot should rest only on the iron. There are, however, many first-class men who ride with the feet home, but I think the other method is better, because you are able thereby to get a more delicate feel of a horse's mouth ; and for the same reason I advocate the arm being slightly bent at the elbow. Steeplechasing is altogether different, as arms and legs should then be quite straight. You have to hold your horse together for ten minutes or more without a moment's relief, and you would find the bent arm a great strain on the muscles. You will see men who are even strong and in first-class condition, but unaccustomed to riding races, quite tired out with three miles between the flags, whilst a mere boy who is used to the game will finish as fresh as when he started.

I am not, however, going to discuss race riding here, and if you wish to become an expert I should advise you to get some one who trains chasers to let you ride gallops over a course. If you will take my advice you will leave it alone, as you are nearly certain to get hurt sooner or later, and you will find quite enough risks in the hunting-field, with a great deal more satisfaction.

I ought before this to have given you a few hints

on mounting, as the would-be horseman must get into the saddle ere he begins to ride. It is usual to mount on the near (left) side, but I advise a boy to practise getting up on both sides, as, if he hurts his leg, he may find it convenient. We will, however, consider now mounting only on the near side.

Stand in front of the saddle, grasp mane and reins with the left hand, then place your left foot in the stirrup, and swing yourself up. In this way, if the horse should happen to move on, the movement helps you to rise ; whereas, if you stand behind the saddle, a very nasty accident may be the result. Another way of mounting a young horse, or one that will not stand, is to grasp the cheek of bridle in the left hand, and swing yourself up with the pommel, but before doing this you should ascertain that the girths are sufficiently tight, or the saddle may slip.

Mounting and dismounting ought to be the first step in boys' riding lessons, though of course when they begin to ride as children this is not possible. I am thinking, however, of a boy between eight and ten, who with a little instruction would soon be able to get into the saddle without any help and without any one holding his pony's head. When he has accomplished this, he may be trusted to go out by himself, and nothing tends to give a boy greater confidence than to go for a ride without being accompanied by parent or groom. I always think that it is a good plan for the first mounting lesson to be given in the stable, and it is also an

excellent place to show a boy how to sit in the saddle. If he starts riding at once, his sole idea is sticking to the saddle, and any hints that may be given then will be entirely unheeded.

There is of course a wide difference between a horse standing still and one in motion, but a boy will gain a familiarity with the saddle, and, not being afraid of falling off, will be able to give his whole attention to his instructor. It is very important to get into the habit of sitting in the right position, and once acquired it will come naturally afterwards.

Boys should never use spurs, but if they want to wear them, thinking to improve the appearance of a boot, the rowels should always be removed. Nine out of ten grown-up people do not know how to use them, or use them at the wrong time. More accidents occur and more horses run away from the use of spurs than from any other cause. I have often seen a man, who has been shaken from the centre of the saddle in going over a jump, sawing at his horse's mouth, and vainly endeavouring to stop it, whilst all the time the spurs were scoring the poor brute's sides, and driving it to madness.

There is a wide divergence of opinion as to the merits of the best safety-stirrup, but for a boy who is learning to ride I think there is nothing better than the old-fashioned boot-stirrup. With this it is impossible to get hung up, and, as the foot cannot enter more than a certain distance, the

boy gets into the habit of riding on the ball of the foot.

A great many men, who are otherwise good riders, cannot get out of the habit of clutching at the reins when a horse is jumping a fence. This, let me tell you, is a fatal thing to do, and is the cause of more falls than anything else. I think I have already stated that bending a horse's neck contracts the action of his hind legs. Watch a bad rider, and you will see what happens for yourself. The horse rises at a fence, and for the moment all is well ; but then the rider finds himself launched into mid-air, and involuntarily takes a firm grip on the reins. At that second the horse is wanting to stretch out his neck and get the full benefit of the spring with which he left the ground, but the tightening rein draws in the head and contracts the muscles of the hind quarters. This has the effect of shortening the stride and curtailing the distance which would have been otherwise cleared. The consequence is the horse's hind legs usually catch on the fence, and, if there is a ditch beyond, his fore feet are nearly certain to drop into it. This, of course, means a fall, and when the rider rises to his feet he generally pours out curses, and sometimes blows, on the offending quadruped, for a mistake committed by the man and not the animal.

The offenders themselves are very seldom aware they are guilty of this grave fault, and, it being a delicate subject for advice by friends, they do nothing to mend their ways. The habit, however,

once acquired, is very difficult to get out of, and a boy should be especially careful not to fall into it. You should be able to sit a horse over a fence without reins, and it is a good plan to have a few rides in a school on a trained jumper, so that you will get into the habit of balancing yourself without assistance from the bridle.

The bad rider looses the reins as the horse is going at the fence, and tightens them when in the air.

The beginner should not—and in fact no man until he has had considerable experience should—think of giving any assistance to a horse in the act of jumping. A really good rider with decent hands can undoubtedly help a horse, but the average man generally does more harm than good by his interference. The boy to whom I am now talking need not therefore worry himself about this question, and all he has to think about is to sit still and give the horse his head.

Do not, however, let everything go before you get to the fence, or the horse will not understand your intentions, and may possibly refuse ; but just keep a gentle feel on the reins until you are in the air, and then leave the animal to do the rest.

Sit forward as the horse rises and back as he lands. Failing to observe this rule is, I firmly believe, one cause of a beginner getting into the habit of pulling at the bridle when in the air. Just think for a minute and you will see this is reasonable. The action of the horse rising from the ground throws you back,

and the instinct of self-preservation prompts you to clutch what is in your hand—which is, of course, the reins—to restore your balance. The horse has meanwhile reached the summit of the arc, where the slightest touch on the bridle must lessen the width of his leap. The involuntary pull which you took on the reins has more than restored you to an upright position, and you are slightly forward of the perpendicular. The horse then descends, and the whole weight of your body, which is already inclining in that direction, goes forward and either lands you between his ears or brings you heavily to the ground.

You will therefore see that you risk making your horse fall, in the first place by checking him in the air, and in the second by throwing your weight on to his forehand at the moment of landing ; and that, even if he does not fall, it is highly probable that you will “cut a voluntary.”

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A gallop after hounds is the greatest pleasure that riding can afford, and I therefore hope that it is your intention to take the field. Even if the hunting instinct is entirely absent from your composition, you will find pleasure in galloping over fences, though the sport itself does not appeal to you.

I should always advise a boy to begin his hunting in a provincial country, where there is no crowd and where he can gather some knowledge of the sport. He should learn to take an interest in the

doings of hounds before he thinks of the fences. Let him learn to sit his pony over a fence, and gain perfect confidence in himself ; then he should start out with the sole idea of keeping as near hounds as he can.

When you go hunting, you must keep your eyes and your ears open. Don't waste your time in admiring your boots and talking to your friends. Every moment you are out you may learn something, and you will do well to cultivate a habit of observation. Be on the alert and ready to start directly there is a "Holloa-away !" Then get after hounds as quick as you can and do your best to stick to them.

Pick your place in the fence, and ride your own line. You will probably often come to grief, and experience only will teach you the place to choose ; but, if you always follow, remember you will never get any better. Pick your place, and don't hesitate or change your mind. Keep your eye on the pack, and watch closely the leading hound ; you will soon learn to know when he has the scent and when it is only drive that carries him on. Directly you notice him faltering, take a pull at your horse, and then, when the rest of the pack reach him, you will see if they have overrun the scent.

Of course when you first begin hunting you will not often be in a position to watch the leading hound if it is a difficult country to cross, but you will be able to see him occasionally, and you must make the most of your opportunity. Masters

and huntsmen would be saved much needless anxiety if their field had been educated in this important point before they attempted to follow a pack.

In riding at a fence, always go straight at it, as by swerving off to one side or the other you will endanger your own life and that of the man behind you. If the fence in front of you is found impracticable on nearer approach, and you wish to choose another right or left, look first of all if by doing so you are likely to interfere with the man behind you. It is an unpardonable offence to cross a man or to take his place.

These are all the general rules of the game, and apply to the man as well as the boy, but I think the latter would like further details.

School authorities are very inconsiderate in fixing the long holiday when there is no hunting, but it is generally possible to get some cubbing before returning to school. You must, however, remember that cub-hunting is meant for the education of young hounds, and not for your amusement ; but it is also an excellent time for educating you in the sport.

Let us then suppose your pony is ready, that you have learnt in the paddock to sit him over a hurdle, and have ascertained where hounds are to meet, as well as the time. You have arranged with the groom to call you, and the kitchenmaid has promised to have a cup of tea with some boiled eggs ready. Don't start out on an empty stomach,

or before many hours have passed there will be a craving in that region which will entirely spoil your pleasure.

It is a morning in early September, and, as you ride out of the stable-yard, the sun has not yet risen, but there is a glow in the east that is already dispersing the darkness of night. A slight chilliness in the atmosphere will make you button your coat, but a few minutes' jogging in the saddle will warm the blood. It was rather a drag turning out of bed at such an early hour, but now that you have once started, you wonder why you have wasted such precious time between the sheets. There is an invigorating freshness in the air, and the birds greet you with the full sweetness of their early morning song. The hedges that border the lanes are still full of leaf and are glistening with dew. Perhaps you may be too young to notice these things, but you drink in the beauty of them unconsciously, and they have an exhilarating effect on the spirit.

A six-mile jog lands you at the covert, a wood of twenty acres; at the same moment hounds arrive. The sun is now over the horizon, and no delay is made in putting the pack into covert. You will make acquaintance with the huntsman, and he may perhaps entrust you with the important office of watching a ride.¹ Let me impress on you here, when you undertake this task, never to take your eyes off the ride for one second, for, if you do, at

¹ *i.e.* a path through the wood.

that moment a fox will surely cross. To-day this responsibility is not thrust upon you, and you are at liberty to follow the pack into covert.

The old hounds soon disappear in the under-growth, and only a few young ones are left with the huntsman. Now keep your eyes and your ears open, remembering that your sight and hearing, having the advantage of youth, ought to be as good as a huntsman's who may perhaps be the wrong side of forty.

Hark ! old Solomon has already hit the drag of the dog-fox which he left when he went to his kennel a few hours ago. Now others have joined the cry, and with many deviations they gradually work up to the bunch of dry grass which father fox had chosen as a resting-place after his night's wandering.

The varmint is afoot, and the uncertain, intermittent cry has suddenly swelled to a full, deep-throated chorus. Your heart beats with excitement, and a sudden desire is awakened to follow those entrancing sounds. You scuttle down one ride and up another, reaching a hand-gate on the outside of the covert as the leading hound emerges into the open. For one moment you forget that this is cub-hunting, but the stern realities of the situation are brought to your mind when the whip gallops up and turns hounds back into covert. The huntsman then blows his horn and proceeds to rouse the litter which is known to be here.

Except for the huntsman's exhortation to "try for him," all is now silent in the wood. A hound speaks, and in a few seconds the whole pack are in full cry again. Listen and you will hear they have divided, showing that there are several foxes afoot. Now sit still where you are and await further developments. A portion of the pack are working towards you, and it is evident they are not very far from their fox. There is a pattering on the leaves in the brushwood close by, and the next moment a fine cub hurries over the ride. What a glorious sight! and how your throat itches to give a holloa! But keep silent, for hounds are on his line, and you don't want to get their heads up. See them now come dashing across the ride and disappear in the thicket beyond.

Your ears must now tell you the direction they are running, and your judgment should inform you which ride you are most likely to see them next. There! you were just in time to see the white-tipped brush flash over the green into the thick covert beyond. This is near the outside of the wood, and master cub must either face the open or turn back, but being of a bold disposition, he decides to go away. On this occasion his boldness saves him further molestation, for the whip stops the hounds and turns them back into covert.

The rest of the pack are running in a distant part of the wood, and you hurry off to join them. Four cubs and a brace of old foxes have gone

away, leaving behind the weakest of the litter, and hounds are giving him a very warm time. Orders have gone forth to the whips not to stop the pack now if a cub should go away, but this one does not seem at all inclined to try his luck in the open.

The ground is becoming foiled, and only a few of the old hounds can speak to the line, until at last the music ceases altogether. The cub has probably lain down, and we must now refind him. Take a ride some distance away from the huntsman and watch it closely. You know the cub is somewhere in the quarter between you and the huntsman.

The buzzing of a fly is the only sound that breaks the silence in your immediate neighbourhood, and were it not for an occasional faint twang of the horn, you might think the hunt had left.

The frightened twitter of a blackbird tells of something moving at last, and you gaze intently down the ride. The next second the animal you are looking for is standing there in full view ; you never saw him come, and you can hardly believe your eyes. He has his mouth open and tongue hanging out in spite of the few minutes' rest, whilst with head slightly on one side he is immovable as a statue, listening for sounds of his enemies ; then, satisfied they are some distance away, he creeps into the undergrowth.

Now you may give your lungs a chance in a

holloa that will reach the farthermost point of the wood, and keep on until some of the pack or the huntsman appear. Your voice is unfamiliar, but it has a genuine ring in it, and the hounds quickly respond. Now turn your pony's head the way the fox has gone, and wave your hat in that direction. Your motions are rewarded by a burst of music, and the hunt is started again.

"Tally-ho ! gone-away !" cries the whip at the corner of the wood, and you must get to that point as quick as you can. You are smart enough to get there as the leading hound comes out of the covert, and can watch the remainder of the pack as they strive to reach him. Give them a second to get settled, then you can sit down and ride your hardest.

In spite of a brilliant September sun there is a scent on the grass, and the cub is not far in front. You have marked a gap in the first fence, and your pony flying it easily lands you alongside of the pack. The next fence is a high bullfinch, with a stiff footstile in one corner, the only feasible place. It is not a jump you would select for choice, but your blood is up, and you mean to stick to hounds if possible. You have got a good start, and must try to keep it. The timber, though strong, is not very high, and is really no higher than the hurdle you have jumped at home. Go at it, and don't hesitate.

Your pony does not quite like the look of that strong top-rail, and is not over-confident in his

own powers of jumping; but he too is imbued with the spirit of the chase, and, gaining courage from the squeeze of his young rider's legs, he goes boldly at it. You are over, and alone with the pack. This is a moment you will never forget, and you are on the road to become a first-class man to hounds.

As your pony lands on the hard footpath beyond, you hear some one say, "Well done!" and looking round you find it is a horse-breaker on a three-year-old. He was on the outside of the covert, and slipping round quickly was in time to see you disappear over that first gap, which the young 'un jumps beautifully and is anxious for more. Jim Thompson is, however, a faded light, and his nerve has gone. At one time a superb horseman, for whom no fence was too big; whom no fall, however bad, could daunt; but a taste for strong liquors, acquired in youth and freely indulged in in mature age, has entirely ruined his nerve. Watch him now, and it may be a warning to you not to fall into his errors. The young horse has seen your pony jump the stile, and is very keen to follow the lead. See how well his rider holds him together, and keeps him moving with hocks well under him in a collected stride. The generous dram of spirit poor Jim took before leaving home has begun to ooze out, and the nearer he approaches the stile the stronger it appears. The young horse also is not quite sure of his jumping powers, and hesitates in the last few strides, wanting encouragement from his rider, but

the limp and shaking legs inspire him with no confidence. Another few strides and he is close to the timber ; then suddenly he stops short and refuses. Jim gallops off home to deliver a half-spoilt horse to the owner, and to spend the remainder of the day in the public-house, dreaming of days that are past and runs he has seen.

Never mind Jim now ; hounds are running, and you are some fifty yards to the left of the main body. One moment, though, for a word of caution. You must not think because you have cleared a fair-sized bit of timber that your pony has no limitations in that direction. Do not over-face him or tax his powers beyond their capabilities, and if there is any choice always select the smallest place.

A half-open gate lets you through into the next field, which is a fallow, in preparation for the sowing of wheat. The freshly turned soil brings the pack to their noses, and now you must stand quite still. No ! don't turn round to see if any one is coming up, but keep your eyes glued on the hounds and watch what they are doing. Two very promising couple—all of one litter—of the young entry have been carrying the scent thus far, and now they must leave it to their elders to put them right. Swinging themselves forward they fail to touch the line, the reason being that the fox has turned short to the right for the smoother headland and to avoid the half-broken clods. Old Lavish, who had been left behind in covert, now

comes up, and by aid of an excellent nose, assisted by the wisdom of age, speedily unravels the mystery.

At this check you had feared it was all over, and your spirits rise again when you see the pack fly to Lavish's tuneful note. The fence ahead appears a very simple affair, and the field beyond is old seeds. Your experience in the country—perhaps looking for blackberries—has taught you that the yellow grass and briars in front of the hedge you are now riding at will most probably conceal a ditch. This knowledge you expect to be shared by the pony, and, sticking in your heels, ride gaily at the obstacle. Crash ! bump ! The ground rises up suddenly and hits you a smack on the head. For the fraction of a second you are dazed, then jumping to your feet you clutch at the reins and prepare to remount. What happened ? Only a blind ditch, and you rode at it rather too fast, so that when the pony put his feet in the ditch he could not recover, and both of you rolled over the fence into the field beyond. Your nose is bleeding a little, and you have scratched your face, whilst your hat is smashed out of shape—but these are mere trifles. Climb on the pony as quick as you can, for the pack are only just disappearing through the next fence, and you will easily catch them up. Experience is a valuable tutor, and this little mishap will have taught you the necessity of riding slowly at a fence when the ditch facing you is concealed by grass or tangled briars.

The country now assumes a different aspect, for the estate we are crossing is in the owner's hands, and is a legacy from a sequence of bad tenants. A year or two ago it was under the plough, but now a thin covering of wiry twitch-grass has spread over the surface, and, as far as hunting is concerned, is not a bad substitute for turf. No ditches guard the straggling, ill-kempt hedges, which have many weak places, and you may ride at them with the fullest confidence.

For five or six fields hounds run fast over this sort of country, and you are just able to keep with them, though the pony is fast tiring, and his heaving sides tell you that a halt will soon be advisable. Make the most of your precious moments, though you will only realise in dreams for many days to come the period of divine ecstasy through which you have passed. There is a limit to the appreciation of any pleasure, and the cup is brimming now, though it will not run to waste, but will be absorbed by your brain; and you will live again through the incidents of the run.

The sun is gaining power, and a bare stubble-field brings the pack to their noses. Even to your inexperienced eye a crisis has been reached, and a little human intelligence will be required to assist hounds in their difficulty, but fortunately at this moment the huntsman and first whip appear.

What had happened to them? The whip had been on the farther side of the wood and the huntsman had taken a fall in galloping down a boggy

ride, his horse getting away from him. The second whip, who had holloaed the fox from the covert, was a new hand, and in his previous place had orders never to ride over a fence, but to go back for any hounds that were missing. Finding that the pack were two couple short, he went back into the wood to find them, and then assisted the huntsman to catch his horse. It thus happened that you and the horse-dealer were the only people to get away. Two or three early rising members of the hunt, who had turned up at the meet with severe punctuality, had found a sunny spot on the up-wind side of the wood, where they passed the time with cigarettes and conversation. When they hear of the gallop they will curse the huntsman for not blowing his horn ; but for the present we will leave them in happy ignorance of hounds' doings, and return to the check.

The huntsman sees there is no time to be lost, and, grasping the situation at a glance, he lifts the pack across the stubble-field. Beneath the shadow of the high hedge the ground is still moist from the morning dew, and hounds soon strike the simeuse where the fox has crept through. Another stubble and hounds can only slowly puzzle out the line, so that there is every chance of the hunt coming to a speedy end.

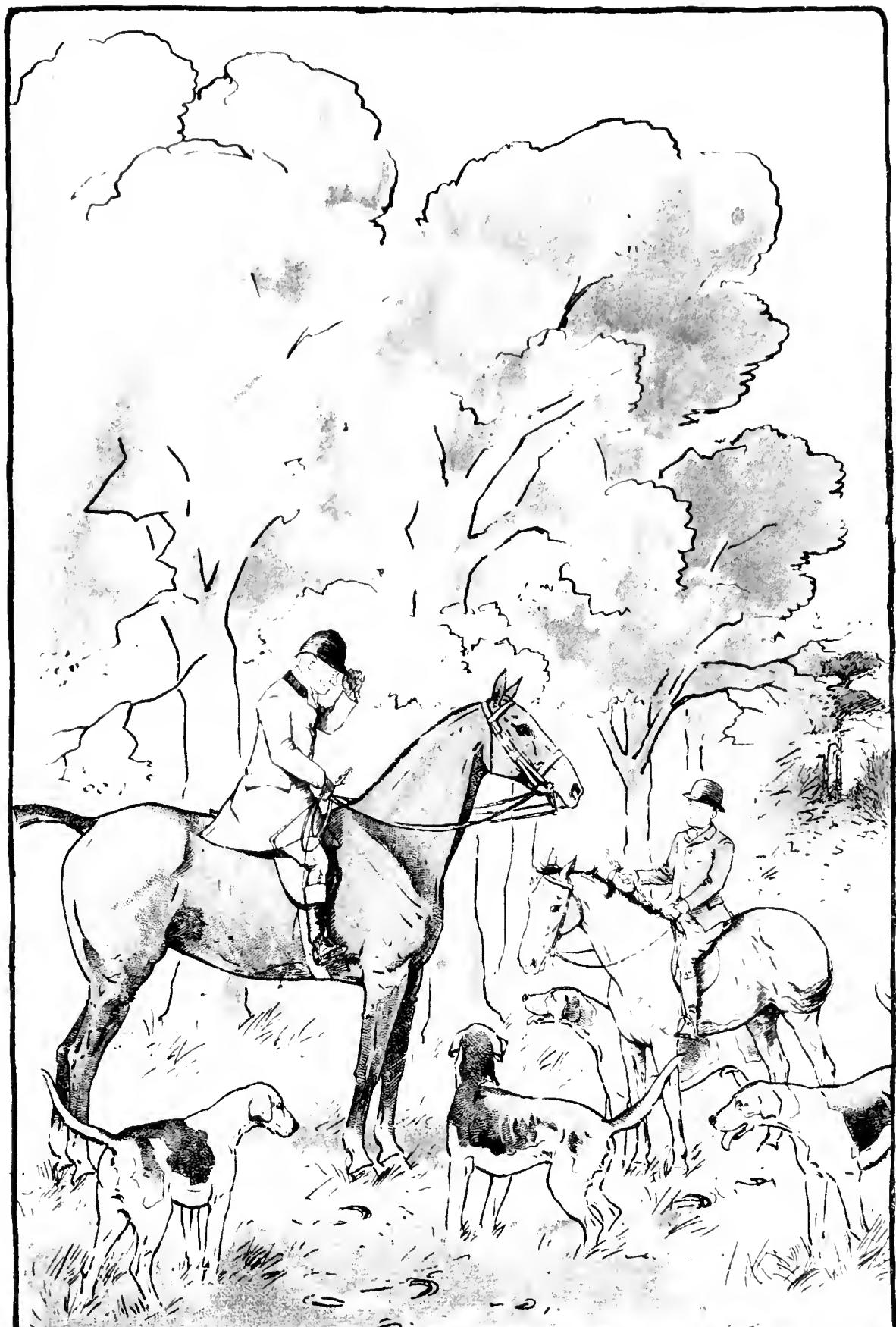
We are on the summit of some rising ground, and the country before us shelves away to a little stream below. Your eyes are young, and you should scan the landscape quickly for any moving

object. There ! look ! what was that dark animal disappearing through the hedge two fields away ? For a moment you hesitate, and then the brain confirms the eye's first impression. You burst out with "Yonder he goes !" and to the huntsman's query of "Where ?" you point to the spot. Quick as thought he has the pack at his heels and gallops to the place you indicated, but before they reach it a flood of melody fills the air with joyous sound.

You were right, and now your pony has gained his second wind ; bustle him along and see the end. Crash through that bullfinch, and you find yourself in a long meadow down which the brooks run. Hounds fly up the hedge-side, stop suddenly and turn back. Old Songster makes a dive into the ditch and out jumps the fox, getting a twenty-yard start before he is seen. Tally-ho ! the pack have viewed him, and are racing for his brush. Across the level meadow old hound and young are straining every sinew.

On the farther side of the brook is an open earth, which may mean safety to the fox, and to us the knell of all our hopes. Will they do it ? The excitement is intense. They are gaining on him, his stride is shortening, and now that young Belvoir dog is not a yard behind his brush. Another inch or two, a snap, a snarl, a worry, "Whoo-hoop !" and all is over.

Slacken your pony's girths, put the reins over his head, and fasten them to one stirrup-iron, then turn



MAKE ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE HUNTSMAN

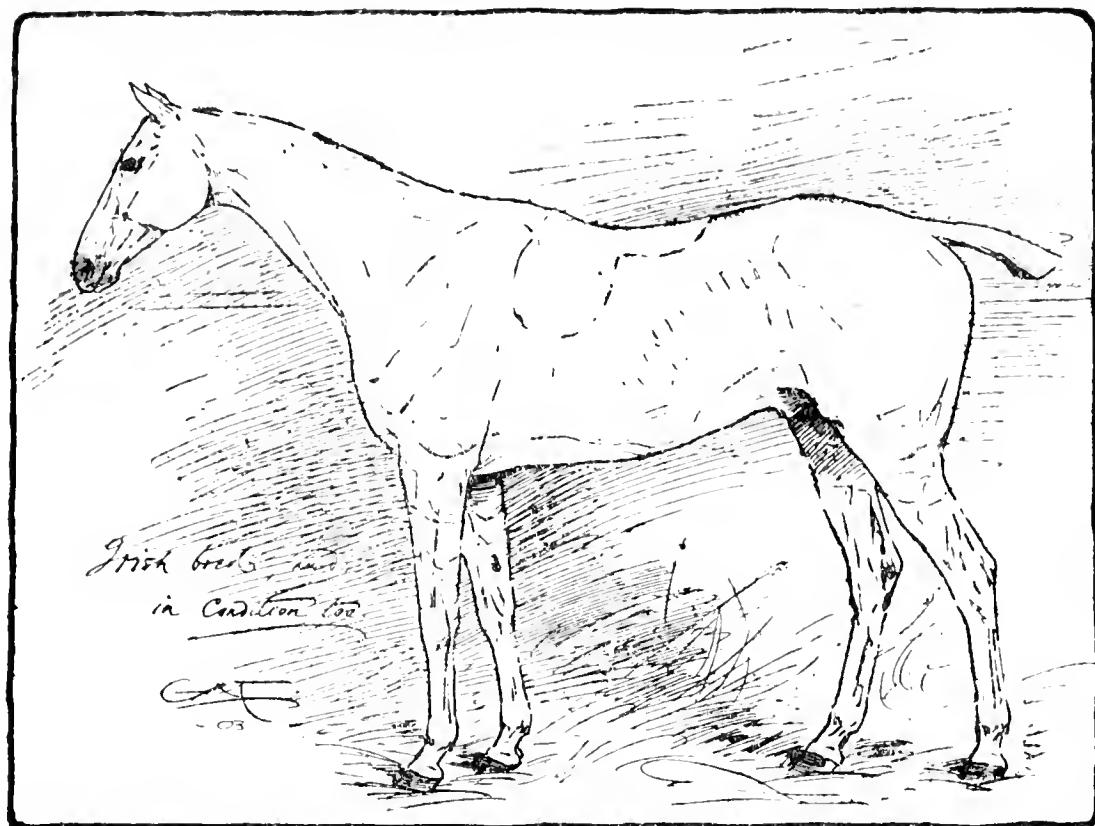
him loose well clear of the pack, and watch the fox being broken up. This performance over, and the huntsman approaches you with the trophies of the chase in his left hand, then he makes a pass with the right, you feel something wet on the cheek, and behold you are "blooded." Gratefully accepting both mask and brush, you fasten them to the saddle and ride slowly home.

Before you retire, however, there is one point you want explained, and, as the huntsman in this instance is unable to explain it, I will make it clear for you. You noticed that the fox you holloaed across the ride was not the same hounds killed, and the huntsman has told you it was the old vixen, whose head you are carrying away. This is what happened. A tired cub went away, but fortunately for him he found his mother lurking in a hedgerow some two fields away from the covert, when, acting on the maternal advice, he promptly laid down and left her to take his place. The poor old lady had been hovering about the neighbourhood in her anxiety for her family and hoping for an opportunity of this kind, but she had been considerably hustled before leaving the covert, and her strength was not equal to the task of getting away from hounds, so that she sacrificed her life for that of her offspring.

Arriving at the stable-yard, it is a proud moment for you when John the stud-groom, who taught you riding, comes out and sees the head dangling from the saddle. Of course he takes a great interest

in Master George, and, like all the better class of grooms, is a very keen sportsman. You give him every detail and incident of the morning's sport, living it all over again in pouring out the story to sympathetic ears.

You may be pardoned for relating your prowess in the field to the family circle, but I need hardly tell you that a modest reticence with regard to these matters is more becoming when discussing it with friends. Not only must you never refer to your own personal deeds, but you must not allow yourself to imagine that your performance was in any way out of the common or meritorious. The next time you go hunting you will probably do something foolish, and never see hounds after they leave the covert. Conceit about anything is certain to lead sooner or later to a downfall, but in riding to hounds it is a sure pathway to a swift and humiliating retribution.



CHAPTER III

THE CHOICE OF A HORSE: AND ITS HANDLING

THE choosing of a pony is generally not left to the boy, but, as he will some day have to buy his own horses, it will be as well for him to gather knowledge on the subject before that time arrives. Let us, however, first of all consider the needs of the boy who is learning to ride, and imagine we are addressing a parent who has not previously had much experience in horse-flesh.

In a boy's *first* pony, the one essential is perfect quietness, and to make sure of this one ought not

to buy too young an animal. Never mind how old the pony is, if he is sure-footed and does not stumble. A "slug" is to be preferred to a fiery animal, as the boy gains confidence when he can kick his pony in the ribs, and controlling a too willing animal by the bridle is as yet to him an unknown art.

The absence of every vice is imperative, such as kicking, shying, rearing, or bucking.

Good shoulders are necessary, and are as important in a boy's first pony as a hunter. The reason for this is that a good-shouldered, well-behaved pony is easy and pleasant to ride, so that a beginner soon learns to enjoy the motion ; whereas a heavy-shouldered brute, that is uncomfortable even for an expert rider, would shake out any desire he had to become a proficient horseman. The smaller the pony the better, if it is strong enough to carry the weight required ; and it should never be too big for the boy to mount easily by himself. The beginner's first idea when he gets on to the back of horse or pony is that he must fall off, and, the nearer he is to the ground, the less terrible will this prospect appear.

The boy who thinks nothing of a fall on the ice, or being knocked over at football with half-a-dozen others on top of him, will tremble at the idea of tumbling a few feet from a saddle. Let him overcome this feeling as quickly as possible, and he will soon gain that confidence in himself without which there is no pleasure in riding.

A boy's pony should be narrow between the rider's legs, and a saddle with no stuffing in the flaps should be used. This is most important, as a little fellow with short legs, in trying to stretch across a wide-barrelled pony, has his seat spoilt, and perhaps the proper growth of his limbs seriously interfered with.

If a parent has not the requisite knowledge of horse-flesh, he had better employ a dealer to find the animal he wants ; but it very often happens that a friend has a pony to part with which his boy has outgrown. The advantage of going to a respectable dealer is that you can return the pony if it does not suit, and I think it is the most satisfactory plan. Make a very careful trial before you decide to keep, and it is as well not to make up your mind until you have had the pony two or three days in the stable.

I do not think that there is sufficient attention given to breaking in small ponies, and people do not appreciate the importance of having them properly trained for beginners. Fathers and mothers would be saved much painful anxiety if they could have perfect confidence in their youngsters' mounts. A pony of good disposition is very easily taught, and there would be no difficulty in training it not to kick, to stand still if the boy falls off, or to behave well under any circumstance that may arise. In these days no pony can be considered fit for a boy until it has become thoroughly accustomed to motor-cars and steam-rollers.

The day will come when the boy will have to choose a horse for himself, and it is as well he should train his eye to the general conformation of the animal. Any book on the horse will instruct him, with the help of a diagram, in the list of names by which different parts of the body are known, and a superficial study in anatomy will do him no harm. It is, however, only by a practical experience with the living animal that he can gain the requisite information which will be of use in gauging its capabilities.

There is one rule I would have you remember, which is—never buy a horse you do not like. This at the first glance appears to be a proceeding which no one is likely to be guilty of, but as a matter of fact it is what many of us are continually doing, and being sorry for afterwards. The persuasive tongue of the seller draws our attention to the good points, and the impression which we had formed gradually fades away, only to be remembered when the new purchase is in our stable. You may occasionally miss a very good horse by my rule, but I think in the long run you will find it a good rule to bear in mind.

If I had to choose a horse from one point only I would select his head, and the novice is quite as competent to form a judgment in this particular as the most expert horse-dealer. Do not allow rules which you may have heard as to the shape of a head, or any ideas of your own, to guide you, but rely solely on the intuition which the expression

conveys to your mind. A horse's character is plainly written in the expression of his face, and, if you have the perception to read it rightly, you will never go far wrong.

People may laugh and tell you that it is not customary to ride on a horse's head, and make humorous remarks; but you can ask them to point out any animal which has borne a great character, either in the hunting field or on the race-course, that has had a bad expression.

Occasionally a horse of very great courage may have a leavening of obstinacy in his character which may lead him into bad habits if not properly treated. A horse is a servant, and must understand it is his duty to obey; but no master with any sense would expect to get the best results from a servant by ill-usage. Your object should be not to break the spirit of a horse, but to tame and train it for your own advantage. This is, however, touching on a subject which we will refer to later on, and we will now consider some other points in making a purchase.

A good shoulder is, I think, the most important feature in a horse's conformation, both for the comfort of the rider and for the saving to the animal's limbs. No one would ever dream of buying a hack with bad shoulders, and the man who knowingly buys a hunter afflicted in that way is not far removed from a suicide. There are, however, many degrees between the perfect shoulder and the very bad, but unfortunately

there is no method of ascertaining the point where they graduate from moderately good into absolutely unsafe.

When buying a horse never take any one's opinion about shoulders, and do not trust to the judgment of your eye. The only sound test is to get on his back, jump a fence, and gallop down hill. Some horses have apparently beautiful shoulders to look at, but cannot use them, and this you will speedily find out when you gallop down a grass field.

Several years ago I bought a horse which I hoped would carry me hunting and win me a race at the end of the season. I remember many good judges remarking on his beautiful shoulders, and on the strength of their opinions I rode him across Leicestershire with the utmost confidence. I began to think this confidence was rather misplaced after he had given me about half-a-dozen crushing bad falls, and that his shoulders were not quite as perfect as they looked. He was a very clever horse, and would not come down if he could help it, but when he did fall I never knew what had happened for a few seconds. I invariably found myself facing the fence I had come over, and generally with a collar-stud burst, two signs which I look upon as indicating a bad kind of spill.

After a series of tumbles out hunting and between the flags I came to the conclusion that the horse did not suit me, and I therefore sold him

to go in harness ; but before parting with him I asked a friend who had considerable experience to get on his back. That friend gave his opinion before he had been in the saddle five minutes, and it was—"He is the worst shouldered brute I ever rode, and I would not hunt him for a hundred pounds." This was a horse that men who had not ridden spoke of as having "beautiful shoulders."

The horse with a perfect shoulder and a natural balance is hard to find, but it is what you should always aim at getting in your search for a hunter. When you are fortunate enough to secure this luxury, make the most of him and don't part if you can afford to keep.

The leg from the knee to the fetlock joint should be short and flat, with big strong joints. Pasterns that are extra long show a weakness, but the other extreme is as bad, because pasterns are the natural springs to lessen the jar of jumping, and a horse with very short ones is certain, sooner or later, to become injured in legs or feet. A man who jumps any height will be considerably shaken if he lands on his heels, but he will save nearly all jar by letting his toes first touch the ground. The straight and very short pastern joint of a horse gives the same result as a man landing on his heels.

Do not buy a horse that is light of bone : I mean by this one that has not bone in proportion to the rest of his body. Whether the animal

is capable or not of carrying your weight is a question you must decide for yourself, but his limbs must first of all be strong enough to carry his own carcase. I think you will generally find that a seller has a greater opinion of his horse's weight-carrying abilities than any one else.

A hunter must have a large proportion of thoroughbred blood, and I would always prefer a clean-bred one if he had the necessary substance to carry me. The advantage of riding a fast horse to hounds is that you very seldom have to *gallop*, and he is only cantering when the hairy-heeled sort are going at their best pace. In hunting, however well you know the country, you are always coming upon the unexpected, and when a horse is cantering his limbs are under control, so that he can change a leg or put in an extra stride to avoid a difficulty at the last moment.

In steeplechasing your object is to get over the fences as quickly as you can, and be first past the winning - post ; but please remember that hunting is a sport and not a race. Cast out the spirit of emulation, never mind what your friends are doing, and think only of hounds. Your aim and object is to be as near the pack as possible without over-riding them, and then to see the fox killed.

There are occasions out hunting, when you get a bad start or are otherwise in a hurry to make up lost ground, on which you must take chances and

gallop over a fence; but the proper pace to ride at any obstacle, be it timber or hedge, is a canter. The horse at that gait is in the position to put forth his greatest power for jumping, and being collected can recover his balance if he happens to make a mistake. A horse, when fully extended in galloping, has no reserve power left to meet any new contingency which may arise at the last moment.

I have remarked before, steeplechasing and hunting are two entirely different things. Hunt meetings are generally pleasant social gatherings, but as a rule they are farcical imitations of a race, and are an insult to hunters. There is a great deal of nonsense talked about a "natural country," and making the fences bigger to enable the genuine hunters to have a chance, but you will find that the confidential animal which has never made a mistake in the hunting-field, usually comes to grief at an obstacle that the chaser—who has never seen hounds—sails easily over.

The chaser must gallop over his fences and the hunter ought not, so that when the latter is brought out between the flags, you are asking him to do something which is entirely opposed to his previous education. I admit that many horses which have won races make excellent hunters, but they must have some further training before they become safe mounts with hounds.

Any horse that is fast enough and has sufficient strength to carry weight, can be made into a

steeplechaser, but he must be properly "schooled." When a horse has once learnt to rise at a fence and the right moment to take off, the act of jumping is very little more exertion than galloping.

The moral of all this is, when you go a-hunting don't imagine you are steeplechasing, and when you are performing between the flags, don't think you are riding to hounds. In a run, if you want to make up lost ground, go as fast as you like between the fences, but take a pull before you have to jump.

This discussion has rather led us away from our subject, which was on thoroughbreds as hunters, but they have one disadvantage ; and that is, being generally thin-skinned, they do not like facing a thorny place which they have to go through. In spite of this drawback my advice is, get all the "blood" you can. Of course, in countries where plough predominates you will not require quite as much breeding, and then again the question of your weight must be considered.

I am afraid, if my reader has accompanied me thus far, he will be getting rather tired of the purchase of horses which he may not have to make for several years, but I want to get the right theories into his head, so that he may follow them up by his own observation.

We will just run through a catalogue of a horse's good points before we close the subject. Let him be deep through the heart, with ribs that swell and bilge behind the girths ; then he is certain

to be a good stayer. A strong back and loins will carry weight. Now stand directly behind him, when, unless the muscles of the thighs and quarters impress you with strength, you may be sure that jumping with a weight on his back will be a task beyond his power. Carry your eye lower down, see that the second thighs are full, and then that the hock is clean and flat. Big bone below the hock is a very important point in a hunter, and never buy one with small fetlock joints. The imperfections of the foot may sometimes be forgiven, as we generally hunt on soft ground, but, when the sole of the foot is flat and nearly level with the frog, you will be wise not to purchase.

Unless, however, you are an expert you will be wise to leave all questions of soundness to your veterinary surgeon and content yourself with selecting an animal that is built on the lines you think best. If your purse is not well filled you must try your luck at auction and hope to pick up a bargain ; but unless you are very careful, you will probably be landed with an old useless brute. With a substantial balance at the bank, the best plan is to go to a good dealer, tell him exactly what you want, and ask him to show you a certain number of animals that he can recommend ; then make your own choice after having a ride. If you see one you do not like, give no reason for not taking it ; just say nothing and pass on to the next.

All the horses in a dealer's stable are for sale,

and it is his business to sell them whenever he gets the chance, but no good man will "stick" you with an animal, if you say at the outset exactly what you require and take it on his recommendation. If, however, you think yourself as clever as the dealer and pit your skill against his, you must not squeal if you eventually get the worst of the bargain. My experience of horse-dealers is that they are quite as straight as dealers in any other article, but I would have you beware of the *gentleman* horse-dealer.

Our old friend Jorrocks quotes, "Who should counsel a man on the choice of a wife or a horse?" but if you take my counsel you will choose both those articles for yourself.

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A small boy would not often be asked to handle or break in a young horse, but when once he has learnt to ride, it is a task he is quite as capable of doing as a man. You may have heard of the rough and ready methods employed out in the west of America, but if you had much experience with the horses which are thus broken, you would see the result is not often satisfactory. Of course out West the time cannot be spared to do any preliminary handling, so that the animal that is wild one day is saddled and ridden the next. Some horses require very little breaking and are willing slaves from the start, but the average animal exacts all the time and patience a man can give if you do not wish him to develop unpleasant habits later

on. Like everything else, the art of taming horses is governed by common sense, and if you reason the matter out you will see for yourself what is the best thing to do.

First of all you have to overcome the animal's natural fear of man and then to give it confidence. Afterwards you must make it understand that you are the master and that, however headstrong at first, it must eventually bend to your will. Absolute quietness is of course essential in the handling of young horses, and a good motto for those who have any animals under their control is, "Be gentle, but be firm."

We are all rather prone to take it for granted that, because animals are denied the power of speech, it is useless to employ the human language in conveying any impression to them, but this is a great mistake, and one that we see committed in the kennel as well as in the stable. You have only to watch horses doing shunting work on railways, or even the slaves in the plough, to see that words can easily be made to convey their proper meanings. The hearing of a horse is more sensitive than that of a man, and there is therefore no reason why horses should not distinguish sounds. They cannot be expected to learn the meaning of every word in the English language or to understand a long sentence, but they have quite sufficient intelligence to know what is required of them when certain words are used.

The average horseman seems to think the only

words that can be understood by a horse are "Whoa!" and "Come up!" and he uses these to attain a variety of ends, so that it is no wonder the poor animal gets confused.

The general idea of "Whoa!" is that it is an order to stop or come to a halt, and yet people are continually using it when the words "Steady!" or "Gently!" would be more applicable. If you wish to be successful with horses every word you use to them should have its distinct meaning, and that meaning should never be varied.

Although we can make horses understand in time what we require them to do when we use certain words, we ought not to blame their intelligence because they appear slow in taking these in, as sounds made by the human voice are unnatural to equine ears. With all our superior brain power, no one has yet discovered the meaning of one word in any animal's language, the reason being that our ears are not sufficiently quick to distinguish the difference in sounds.¹

In my experience I have found that the inflexions of the human voice are more readily appreciated by animals than particular words. By this I mean they know at once if you talk to them in harsh or scolding tones, and equally understand when you speak kindly. There are some men who

¹ The more I watch wild birds, especially at the breeding season, the more I incline to a belief that some species, small and large, have a considerable language of their own, and that words in bird land sometimes vary in meaning according to the manner and circumstances in which they are uttered.—ED.

have no intention of being rough or unkind, but they happen to have harsh and discordant voices that grate on a sensitive ear. These people are seldom successful or popular with animals, and should never attempt the breaking-in of young horses.

Some grooms get into a very objectionable habit of shouting at their charges for no reason at all, and the result is the whole stable become nervous. It is unnecessary to raise the voice above a whisper ; as I have already said, a horse's hearing is very quick. If you were to shout in angry tones at a servant in your employ, you would be aiming a blow at his nerves, even though the words used were harmless, but if that servant, or, let us say, a delicate woman, happened to be afraid of you, the nervous system would receive such a distinct impression that your voice would always afterwards give a severe shock when raised above its ordinary pitch. If the voice has this effect on a human being, how much more will it jar on the sensitive hearing of a horse ?

I have dwelt rather long on this subject because I consider it one of great importance to horse-owners, and as you are young it is easy for you to begin on the right lines. However, do not accept my conclusions as correct without first reasoning the matter out for yourself and forming your own opinions on the subject.

Grooms are a very conservative body, and do not even deserve the name of "progressive," which is,

I believe, the title adopted by Tories with Liberal ideas. There has been very little change in English stable management for the last hundred years, and any alteration that has been made has always had its inception from outside sources. The result is that we find Americans far ahead of us in their treatment of horses. At least that is my opinion, my view being that their methods are more humane and more sensible. Across the Atlantic the voice plays a very considerable part in the working and management of horses.

American trainers who have come to England have been repeatedly successful in making animals quiet that in other hands had been unmanageable, both in the stable and on the racecourse. The English *trainer and his satellites employ methods because they are hallowed by age, whilst the American is not afraid of making any new departure if it appears to him to be dictated by common sense. That is why I say to you, reason things out for yourself, and use your common sense. You may make mistakes, and get laughed at for departing from the beaten track, but a little laughter will not hurt you, and you will soon find out when you are wrong. At the same time it is just as well to make use of other people's experience in forming your own judgment, and my idea in writing this book is not to give you a complete manual of directions, but to give you hints, and then incite you to think for yourself.

The man who wants to control horses must first

of all learn to control his own temper. Now I imagine we all or most of us have a temper of some sort, and there are very few of us who have not allowed that demon to get the upper hand at some period of our lives. To lose control of one's temper is a sign of weakness, and, like all other weaknesses, can be overcome by force of will. It is bad enough to lose one's temper with a fellow-creature, but to lose it with dumb animals and inanimate objects indicates a mind that has lost its will power, and is swayed by passion. If the heat within you must find vent in an ebullition of temper, pick out a boy bigger and stronger than yourself, and on him pour out your pent-up wrath. When you have expended your energy in trying to hit him and he has given you a good pommelling, you will realise that a temper is liable to get you into trouble if you allow it to become your master.

Horses are very trying, I admit, sometimes, and it is much easier to sit here laying down rules about keeping one's temper than to do it in reality. I am sorry to say I have very often lost my temper with a horse for refusing a fence, but have always felt sorry for it afterwards, and, thinking it over in cold blood, realised I have made a fool of myself.

The old hunter you have ridden several seasons knows your peculiarities better than you do yourself, and will forgive an outburst of temper, because he is aware from previous experience that you will be kind again when the fit has passed. I would, however, have you remember that we gain our power

over horses entirely by the superiority of mind over brute strength, and that a loss of temper is an exhibition of weakness which brings us down to their level.

Whatever you may do with older horses, you must never allow yourself to get irritated or angry with young ones under any circumstances, and if you have not sufficient control over your temper, you had better leave the task to others.

The natural instinct of a horse is to fear man, and that is one of the first things you have to overcome. Most of those disconcerting tricks to which young horses are liable are the outcome of fear, and they really become vices by improper handling.

The qualities that go to make a perfect horse-breaker are useful in every phase of life. He must be cool ; his nerves and temper must be under absolute control ; there must be no vacillation or indecision in his composition, and he must not know fear. Lastly, he should be rigidly firm, unvaryingly kind, and always patient. This may sound to you rather an alarming catalogue of virtues, but if your health and nerves are good, all the rest is merely a question of will.

There are a great many methods of handling young horses, and several books have been written on the subject, but the most practical I have come across is one by Captain Hayes. This work I will recommend to you if it is your intention to tame the unbroken colt, but I have not space here to go fully into the matter.

When you have made your young horse thoroughly familiar with the things he must come in contact with, and he is quiet to ride, you will be anxious to give him his first lesson in jumping. In this proceeding you must expend as much time and patience as you gave to the preliminary handling. Whyte-Melville says : "Do not forget, however, that education should be gradual as moonrise, perceptible, not in progress, but result." In other words, you must not attempt to teach higher mathematics until your pupil has mastered simple arithmetic. Whyte-Melville's "Riding Recollections" is a book every young rider should thoroughly digest. It is not only pleasant reading, but is full of wisdom, and I know of nothing that has been written on the subject of horsemanship which can compare with it.

Some horses are natural jumpers, and require very little tuition, but very few jump in good form without being properly schooled. A man with good nerve will take a horse that has never been over a fence in its life, and ride it across country in the wake of hounds. He will probably get several falls, which I consider very often destroy the confidence of a bold young horse, but he will succeed in getting his mount either over or through the fences. This is a rough and ready method which I do not recommend. Of course our first object is to get after hounds, and it is better to walk through a hedge than to be left behind, but in my view half the pleasure in riding across

country is to do it in the style that gives satisfaction both to yourself and your horse. Any one who is bold enough can get over the fence somehow, but it requires a good horseman to sail over the fence in that smooth and easy style which is the poetry of riding. You who are a beginner cannot hope to attain this perfection at the start, but do not be satisfied with slovenly methods, and strive by degrees to reach the higher standard.

The man with bad hands can never be in sympathy with his horse : hands and horse are for ever fighting against each other. Watch a really good horseman riding over a country and you will appreciate what I mean. Hounds are running, and our friend whom we have selected as an example has secured a good start. The horse has previously been the mount of a bad rider, and remembering the last occasion, dashes off at full speed, and with his head between his knees, endeavours to avoid the pain of an expected drag on the bars of his mouth. The snaffle worked to and fro quickly brings up his head into its natural place, and finding nothing hurts him in that position, is content to leave it there. The first fence now looms in sight, and the horse knows at once, by the mysterious feel of his rider's legs, which spot he will require to jump. When within some fifty yards of the fence, and mindful of previous occasions, he will increase his pace and lean heavily on the bit, but his onward career will suddenly be checked by the application of the curb, which hitherto had not troubled him. This

will bring his head towards his chest, and as he bends to the signal, the curb will be relaxed and the snaffle will play lightly on the sensitive bars. His hind legs well under him, he now moves forward with a short and collected stride, but the firm grip on the saddle-flaps never for a moment allows him to doubt his rider's intention of jumping. A light touch with the bridle and a faint squeeze of the rider's legs then indicate that the exact moment for taking off has arrived. Much to the horse's surprise, he finds that little effort is needed to clear the fence, and except for a fairy-like touch on the reins there is nothing to restrain him from stretching out his head as he lands on the other side. Thus from fence to fence horse and rider go on, gradually gaining confidence in one another, until at the end of the day the wild, rushing, headstrong brute has been converted into a temperate hunter.

Now let us go back to the preliminary lessons in jumping. A stiff wooden bar that will not break should be used, and the colt driven over it with long reins, but you will find full directions for this in Captain Hayes' book. The mistake that most people make is asking their horses to jump too high at the start. In the beginning the bar should be on the ground, and should be raised gradually a few inches at a time. For the first lesson three feet is quite high enough, and after that you can increase it slightly every day, but the most important part in putting a horse over a bar is to make him jump in good style from

his hocks, and never faster than a canter. Where possible it is better to have the school enclosed.

After a course of lessons in the school, you can ride your pupil over a few fences, but here again let me advise you to select small places at the start. Your object must always be to give the horse confidence in himself, and never allow him to sicken of his task, so that jumping will be to him a pleasure and not an irksome duty.



IT IS AN UNPARDONABLE OFFENCE TO
CROSS A MAN OR TO TAKE HIS PLACE

CHAPTER IV

VARIOUS HINTS IN RIDING AND DRIVING

I DO not wish you to attach too much importance to your clothes, but a few hints may be useful to those whose parents do not happen to be riders themselves. The fit of your breeches or the shape of your boots will not make you a horseman, but they may materially conduce to your comfort in the saddle. The boy in irreproachable horseman's dress who has no idea of riding is a subject for ridicule to onlookers, and is more conspicuous

when it is evident he is conscious only of his perfect clothing and ignorant of his equestrian deficiencies. The first pair of breeches will give a boy much harmless enjoyment, and when he pulls them on he will feel he is one more stage nearer to manhood, but his performance in the saddle ought to justify the wearing of a horseman's outfit.

What we shall put on is not, however, a question that concerns us much in early life, and an arbitrary parent generally decides the manner in which we shall be clothed. The time comes eventually when we have a voice in the matter, and it is for that moment I am preparing to offer you advice.

Neatness is the essential point in a horseman's dress, and I would have you always bear this in mind. Any slovenliness or untidiness, which might be overlooked and forgiven in a pedestrian, is brought into conspicuous prominence when one is mounted on a horse. In fact your whole appearance should be of an unassuming character, with your clothes fitting in a manner that defies criticism, and of a quiet pattern that does not catch the eye.

Breeches are the most important feature of a horseman's rig. A misshapen coat may sometimes be pardoned, a battered old hat overlooked, and bad boots condoned, but an ill-fitting pair of breeches condemn the wearer at once. Breeches, to be thoroughly comfortable for riding and to fit properly, should be too tight for walking. They should be very loose in the thigh and just as tight

at the knee. There are now in most provincial towns tailors who can make breeches fairly well, but until recently it was impossible to get them outside of London. However good a tailor may be with other articles of apparel, it is hopeless to get breeches from him unless he has made them a speciality, and the best London man will fail without he is given sufficient opportunities of trying on. The fit of breeches is quite as important to the comfort of the wearer as it is to his general appearance. For your own sake and that of your friends you should clothe yourself in a manner that defies criticism—perfection in fit with sober pattern and colouring. Here let me repeat, that dress which will pass muster on foot may become a glaring eyesore when you are on the back of a horse.

For ordinary riding purposes you can please yourself, and you have a wide range wherein to make your choice, but if money is a consideration, you would do well to have things which will stand the strain of a day's hunting. Riding-boots are rather expensive articles when required only once or twice a year, but a neat pair of leather gaiters do equally well for an occasional day, and your feet can be shod in ordinary walking boots. Stout cloth breeches of a material which I believe is called whipcord will stand an immensity of wear, and when "strapped," *i.e.* patched, with buckskin on inside of the knee will last several years.

The Newmarket boot, which has a box-cloth leg

and a leather foot, is both neat and comfortable for summer use, but it appears to have gone out of fashion lately. However hot the weather may be, do not be led into the mistake of wearing thin breeches, as they will not stand the chafing of the saddle, and your own skin will suffer at the same time. If it happens you get unexpectedly the opportunity of a ride and have no riding breeches, a small strap below the knee will convert your ordinary trousers into very satisfactory substitutes. The action of a horse has the effect of making trousers work up, and unless there is something to keep them in place, you will soon have exposed to view a wide expanse of bare leg. The old-fashioned strap beneath the foot kept the trousers in place, but did not prevent chafing at the knees.

These hints given here on the subject of costume can be of no practical use to those with ample means at their command, as they have only to put themselves unreservedly in the hands of the best bootmakers and tailors to be turned out in correct style. The poor man or his son may perhaps be able to glean some information which will save his pocket and help him to avoid glaring errors.

The taste of the individual may be allowed some latitude in the selection of a costume for an ordinary ride, but in the hunting field custom has ordained that certain articles shall be worn, and to depart from these unwritten rules is to make yourself unpleasantly conspicuous. A gentleman owes it to himself to be ever clean, neat, and tidy,

but if he appears at the meet in unorthodox costume he is not showing a proper respect to the master or the hunt.

For the man or boy who hunts only once or twice in the season, it would be absurd to turn out in the full war-paint of the chase, but the regular follower of hounds should always wear a red coat. A red coat, however, demands certain accessories, and to omit any detail is an unpardonable sin. The high silk hat, top-boots, white breeches, and white neck-cloth are absolutely indispensable when the sportsman desires to don pink. It would be better for a man to appear in the hunting field in his shirt sleeves than for him to be guilty of wearing a scarlet coat with jack-boots.

The breeches may be made of any material the wearer chooses, but they must be white and of a good fit. Buckskins when properly cleaned look better than anything else, and I think are the most comfortable to wear, but they require very careful cleaning, and white cotton cords are preferable to badly cleaned "leathers."

The neckcloth must be tied—no dummy, please—and the whole knot should be securely fastened to a flannel shirt with a strong safety-pin. If you want to avoid lumbago, rheumatism, and frequent colds always wear flannel for hunting, and don't be tempted by the luxurious softness to clothe your body in silk. The waistcoat is a very important part of your clothing, and you should remember on it you will depend for keeping yourself warm

when standing at a covert-side in a bitter east wind.

Doubtless nothing equals in smartness a white buckskin waistcoat for wearing with a red coat, but it does not admit sufficient air, and one of the chief rules for health is never to perspire in anything from which the moisture of your body cannot easily escape. The colour may be left to your taste or the want of it, but the material should be of something thick and woolly. The back ought to be made of flannel, which must come down in a flap well over your loins. My idea is that a waistcoat should be made entirely of wool, and that the coat should always be worn open, only to be buttoned up when you have to stand still in a cold wind.

You will find it much pleasanter to be too warm than too cold when you go hunting, but do not make the mistake of preventing the air from reaching your body. Avoid all waterproof abominations, and if you wear plenty of flannel, you can be out all day in a soaking rain without feeling any ill effects. Change into dry clothes directly you get in the house and you will never take cold. When we are young and strong we are rather apt to laugh at rheumatism, pneumonia, or other unpleasant ailments, but the strongest are liable to them, and once they have found us out they are certain to come again. Good health is the most important factor in our daily happiness, and it is generally through some fault of our own that we suffer.

Except in relation to clothes used for riding, you may think I am going somewhat beyond the subject of this book in discussing health, but fully to enjoy horseback exercise you must be strong, and boys do not always realise the importance of keeping themselves fit.

The one essential thing to health is fresh air, both for lungs and body. You should never think of going to sleep without opening your window top and bottom. The cold bath in the morning is not always pleasant to contemplate in mid-winter, but it is a duty which should never be shirked, and the afterglow will reward you for the momentary inconvenience. In winter and summer I make a practice of drying myself after the cold bath in front of the open window. The oxygen of the air thus finds its way direct to the pores of the skin, so that you start the day refreshed and invigorated for whatever work there is to be done.

The air bath is not always possible if you live in a town, for reasons which you will understand, but I anticipate in a few years that all bathrooms will be built facing the east, and will have windows so arranged that one will be able to air the body without exposing it to the public gaze. In your clothing, the principle you should ever bear in mind is to wear material that admits the greatest amount of air, and at the same time allows the moisture from your body to escape.

We all know the old saying that "cleanliness is next to godliness," but I consider it is a part of

godliness. It is a duty we owe to the Creator to keep our minds and bodies in perfect condition.

I think it was on the subject of waistcoats and the necessity of having them ventilated that I was led away to this lecture on health. It is not as important for air to reach the legs as the body, and for that reason we may wear leather breeches, whereas a leather waistcoat would be unhealthy.

In boots we must sacrifice some comfort to appearances, and the well-developed calf, on which the owner prides himself when clad in stockings on the moor or the golf links, may be a source of pain when squeezed into tight top-boots. The top should fit closely to the leg, but the big calf can never hope to look as smart as the spindle-shank.

You may, however, study your comfort in the foot of the boot, which should be roomy with a good thick sole. If the boot has a thin sole or is tight, you will suffer from cold feet. Silk stockings are an advantage in reducing the circumference of the leg, but it is best to have them made with woollen feet.

Patent leather is permissible in jack-boots, but never with tops, and for comfort I should advise you not to use it for either.

Having finished with boots we now get to the spurs. I am not an advocate for the wearing of articles which are for ornament and not for use, but top-boots without spurs have a forlorn appearance that would ruin the *tout ensemble* of an otherwise faultless get-up. In referring here to a spur,

I do not allude to the armed heel that is meant to goad the animal to further exertions, but to the harmless imitation that is guiltless of a sharp rowell. Spurs with rowells should be on the heels of none except the most experienced horsemen, and many of these would find it better to wear them only on special occasions. I make a practice of keeping one pair with sharp rowells, but I never put them on unless the horse requires considerable persuasion, and then I expect their application for one day enough to impress the lesson on his mind. In future a kick in the ribs with the cold blunt iron is generally sufficient to remind the animal of the punishment previously applied. I should strongly advise a boy never to wear anything but dummy spurs, and when his pony requires a little stimulant, he will find the whip all that is necessary.

Whips can hardly be brought under the category of costume, but a horseman's turnout cannot be considered complete without one. Everybody should get into the habit of carrying a stick or something in the hands when riding, even though the occasion for using it is unlikely to arise.

A crop, that is, a whip with hooked handle, should always have a lash attached. The object of the hook is for opening gates, and to use one for that purpose without a lash is to run the risk of having it pulled out of your hand. Nothing looks worse than to see any one carrying a crop without a lash, and if a man comes out hunting with this portion of his whip missing, he is put down at once as a duffer.

If on your ride you are not likely to encounter a gate, then carry only a plain stick, or a whip without a hook.

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The bridle is a most important instrument to a horseman, and it therefore deserves rather more attention than we have hitherto devoted to it. In conjunction with a pressure of the legs, the bridle is the medium which conveys our wishes to the horse.

Some perhaps may imagine it possible to stop a horse by the mere strength of arm, but if they will only give the matter a moment's thought, they will see that when seated on a moving object you have no power to arrest its progress. You could just as easily expect to stop a boat in which you were a passenger by hauling on the painter. I am not sufficiently learned in the subject to describe my meaning in the proper scientific language, but we must all of us have enough sense to know that, to exert any power of leverage, a fulcrum is necessary. When on the back of a horse, the only medium by which we can establish a fulcrum with the earth is through our body to the animal's hind feet. This power is, however, very small, but for that reason we must make the most of it and use it to the best advantage.

Now we cannot expect a horse to walk about on his hind legs, and each of his fore feet must in turn touch the ground eventually if he is to make any

progress. You will therefore say, how is that leverage to be obtained? To get the leverage you will depend entirely on balance, and this is the whole secret of a feeble man being able to control such a powerful animal. You must so manipulate the bridle that the balance of your body comes on the horse's hind quarters, but directly that weight is shifted to the fore-hand, your power is gone and you are practically a helpless passenger. This is my theory, and I may very likely be wrong, but I do not want you to accept what I have stated as gospel without first reasoning it out for yourself. I venture to think you will agree with me, and we will proceed on that assumption.

The curb bridle is of course the means by which you get the most power over a horse, but it is an instrument that requires very delicate handling, only to be used by horsemen of experience and possessing that lightness of touch which we call "hands." In referring here to the curb, I mean that bit and the snaffle-iron combined, but we will first of all discuss the merits and disadvantages of the latter.

The plain snaffle is the father and origin of all other bits. When used in conjunction with a martingale, it can be made to answer the purposes of the double-reined curb, but the snaffle should then have two reins attached. I have already explained that the bit should lie on the bars of the horse's mouth, and that when it works up to the corners it becomes useless as a bridle. The

martingale prevents the horse from throwing up his head, and thus the bit falls into the right position. You must, however, remember that throwing up the head is the only method the animal has of protesting against the unmerited pain which his rider inflicts.

No boy or man who is not an accomplished rider should ever be allowed either a martingale or curb. The former is an instrument of considerable use in controlling a young horse in the hands of a good horseman, but I would never advise a beginner to risk anything that is not perfectly trained.

When I began to ride regularly the first bit of horseflesh I owned was a game little mare with an extraordinarily light mouth, and fortunately for me her late owner advised that she should never have anything except a plain snaffle. In those days I had confidence in the strength of my muscle, and did not appreciate the importance of delicate handling. The consequence of this was, if I wanted to stop I took a dead pull at the reins, when up the mare's head would go, with her ears in my face, and the bit in the corners of her mouth. In that position I could pull until I was tired out, but it never inconvenienced the mare or arrested her onward progress. Gradually it dawned upon me that physical force was of no avail, and I got into the habit of treating her mouth as a thing to be touched very tenderly.

You will understand that if I had tied her down with a martingale she could never have taught me

that practical lesson, and it is for that reason I have introduced this personal incident.

Although less harm can be done to a horse's mouth with a snaffle by hanging on to the bridle than would be the case with a sharper bit, you must still use it with all gentleness. The plain snaffle is a very valuable bit when properly handled, and a horse will bend to it as easily as to a curb, but you must play with it in his mouth, and never take a steady pull.

Try to forget that you have any strength in your muscles, for if you were a Hercules your strength would all be wasted in hauling on the bridle. The system which you should always go upon is that of "give-and-take." "Do not pull at a horse and he will not pull at you" is advice that has been written and spoken by many instructors on riding, but it is such a valuable rule to remember that I must be excused for repeating it here.

A confirmed runaway is of course not pleasant to ride on with only a snaffle, but I do not advise any inexperienced horseman to mount an animal of such character. A horse with an excellent reputation may, however, in a momentary exuberance of spirits and with a feeling of contempt for a snaffle, suddenly take it into his head to go faster than you think desirable. Unless you can bring him under control again, the pace is liable to increase, and in a few more seconds you will find yourself run away with. The beginner's first and only idea is to haul at the reins with all

his might, but however muscular he may be his strength soon gives out, and he then becomes a helpless passenger.

The horse that goes off with his head up in the air, and has no martingale to bring it down, is generally the easiest class of runaway to deal with, though, as he cannot see where he is going, his rider is in a very uncomfortable position for a few seconds. All you have to do is to shake the reins and drop your hands on the withers, when the horse will soon lower his head, and you can get a gentle feel of his mouth again.

The horse that puts his head down or takes the bit in his teeth has to be treated in a different manner. Loose the reins, then pull the bit sharply through his mouth from one side to the other, which method will generally be found effective in bringing his head into the right position. The snaffle, when used in this way, can inflict considerable pain on a horse, but he must be made to understand he will be punished unless he regulates his force to your wishes rather than to his own.

There are many different varieties of bridles which have been invented for subjugating and controlling animals that have been taught to pull by bad riding, but the plain ordinary snaffle and the snaffle combined with curb will be found to answer most purposes. Have nothing to do with a bit that is covered with indiarubber, for though the principle of it may seem right to you in that it is yielding to the horse's mouth, you will find

in practice it dries up all the saliva. When the mouth is harsh and dry, without any saliva or white froth, it is impossible for the rider to be on good terms with his mount. So important do I consider this that if I get on to an animal which some one with bad "hands" has just been riding, I generally give him a handful of grass to munch, and thus restore the saliva.

There are many good horsemen who swear by a gag, and will never ride a horse that attempts to pull in anything else. I refer here to the bridle that is a combination of gag and curb, the former taking the place of the snaffle. I cannot recommend the gag except for special occasions, and then it is useful for a horse that has acquired the habit of boring his head down to his knees ; but as a bit for hunting or regular riding, I consider it is opposed to the first principles of horsemanship and humanity.

In the ordinary double-rein bridle, to which I will presently return, the curb should be looked upon as an instrument of punishment or warning not to pull, and the snaffle should be the medium of conveying your wishes when the horse is on his good behaviour.

The gag presses on the corners of the mouth where you do not want it, and you must either pull the horse's head up in the air or ride on the curb. Both are severe bits, and therefore, when they are used together, you have no means of rewarding a horse for going kindly.

The gag-snaffle, or a gag and a snaffle, are

reasonable bridles, and may suit some horses, but I think they are of most value to men with bad "hands," and those who are conscious of their defects in this respect would do well to make more use of them.

I am supposing you know what a gag is, but I believe many people who ride with it do not realise that they can exert nearly double the power with the reins, and should therefore use their strength with mercy.

This brings us to a consideration of the double-rein curb and snaffle, which is, in my estimation, the nearest thing to perfection in bridles that has been invented. I have, however, already said that it is not a bridle for the inexperienced horseman or the heavy-fisted, and these had better content themselves with using the single-rein snaffle.

The curb is of very little value without a noseband, but it must be neither too tight nor too loose. The horse that tries to get the advantage of you either opens his mouth very wide or keeps it tightly shut, and you must therefore fix your noseband so that he can move his jaws comfortably without opening them too much. The action of the curb makes the horse open his mouth, and you should then play lightly with the snaffle.

Take care that the noseband is not too low, or it will nip the corners of the mouth between it and the bridle, thereby causing a sore place which will irritate the horse.

The cheek of the bit should be of fair length

below the bar, which should be smooth and with only a slight port. The bar that moves up and down is best, as it gives a certain amount of play, and the great object in bridling is not to allow the bit to remain long in one place.

You may have good hands, and your double-reined bridle may be just as I have described, but unless it is put on properly it will be a source of irritation to the horse and consequently unsatisfactory to the rider. I am sorry to say that a great many people do not realise the importance of this, and the first thing I do when mounting a strange horse is to look if the bridle requires adjusting. The curb should be high up in the mouth and the snaffle low. If you go into the saddle-room and look at the double-reined bridles hanging up, you will generally see them as they ought to lie in a horse's mouth, the snaffle falling loosely over the curb.

When the snaffle is too tight, and therefore high in the mouth, it cannot touch the sensitive part, and might just as well be fixed to the tail as be where it is. I have already told you to depend on the snaffle for playing on a horse's mouth, and to look upon the curb only as an aid to the former. Many grooms think it looks smarter to have the snaffle tight, and the horses have to suffer in silence.

Twenty or thirty years ago bits were much too thin, and Whyte-Melville remarks on this in his "Riding Recollections," which may perhaps have had something to do with the change. Now we

seldom see a thin bit, and people have gone rather to the other extreme, so that in some instances the combined thickness of snaffle and curb is nearly as big as a man's wrist. This is, of course, too much iron to put in a horse's mouth, and I can only advise you to use your common sense in finding the happy medium.

Although I do not advise a martingale to be used regularly, it is a very powerful aid to the control of a young or fractious horse. Always have it on the curb rein, because when on the snaffle it neutralises the delicate feel you should have on a horse's mouth. Both instruments of control should be on the same rein, and then as he gives to you with the one, you can play lightly with the other as a reward for good behaviour.

See that the rings of the martingale are not big enough to slip over the rings of the bit, or in jumping a fence you may find the horse's head tied down with very unpleasant results.

A first-rate horseman can do things that are beyond the power of others, and I know one who rides all his horses in martingales; but my friend who reads this chapter would, I feel certain, be better without it, or at least until he has had rather more experience. A bad rider is often confirmed in the error of his ways by using a martingale, and his horse is tortured at the same time.

A "pelham" is a bridle of which I have had very little experience, but though the principle of it is to

my mind all wrong, I can quite understand that a man with bad hands might find it useful.

Do not have your reins too thick, or you will not be able to get the requisite delicate touch, and see that they are kept properly supple.

If you want to be smart, do not have the head-piece of the bridle buckled on to the bit, but let it be sewn. I have no explanation to give for this, but I know that it does not look well, and with that you must be satisfied.



CHAPTER V

VARIOUS HINTS IN RIDING AND DRIVING—*continued*

MOST people imagine they know how to ride when once they get beyond the falling-off stage, but sticking to the pigskin is not a knack to be acquired in a day, and a man cannot pose as a fine horseman when he has not even learnt to preserve his balance. With driving it is different, and any one, who has ever sat behind a horse, may delude himself with the idea that he is a fine whip.

I am not going to write about fancy driving, how to hold your reins and your whip, or the exact angle at which you should be seated on the box; so that if you want to be a smart driver you must go elsewhere for a lesson.

There is, to my mind, too much show and pretence about driving in England. The primary

aim has been lost sight of in trying to attain a style which shall please the eye, and this style is not based on common sense. I am an advocate for a pleasing outward appearance in everything, but when usefulness is sacrificed to show, then I consider we are verging on vulgar snobbery.

The first thing is, of course, the perfect control of the horse, and this must be accomplished without causing him any discomfort. This rule is applicable equally to riding or driving, and it is the principle on which you must base all your dealings with the animal.

I can never understand the amusement some people apparently find in driving four horses in London. The club meets in Hyde Park are, of course, to a certain extent, social functions, but they always appear to me very dismal affairs, and the majority of the drivers look as if the elevation to the box seat had brought a grave responsibility on their shoulders. They might be enjoying themselves, but the casual observer would imagine they were on the way to a funeral.

To rattle along behind a good horse at something like fourteen miles an hour is pleasant enough and there is a little excitement in driving, but most amateur coachmen seem content to crawl at a pace of which a coster's donkey would be ashamed.

There are men who can drive four horses well, and it is a pleasure to see them take a team through traffic at a fairly rapid rate, but the average coachman is a slave to a system of driving, which is

meant more for ornament than for use. What does it matter how you hold your reins, if you can put your fingers on those you want at the right moment? Here I must explain, or you will misunderstand my meaning. The beginner will take his lesson from those who have had experience, and he must acquire those methods which they have found best, but remember they are only the means to attain an end. When the pupil has mastered and become thoroughly familiar with recognised methods, he can then rely on his own judgment as to which he thinks best.

Most of us have been to the Wild West show, and there seen Colonel Cody drive a coach round the ring with four rough ponies. There was nothing stiff or laboured in the way he held the ribbons, and yet he did it with an easy grace without doing it for effect. That is my idea of how four horses should be driven. I can recall another excellent exhibition of the art which I once witnessed, equally effective, but in an entirely different style. This was Lord Lonsdale's drive against time, in which he had backed himself, or others had, to do twenty miles under the hour with four different conveyances. The whole thing was wonderfully well done, and was accomplished in about fifty-one minutes, but what impressed me most was the way in which he handled the four horses. There was no sudden jerk or jumping into the collar by one horse as the heavy char-a-banc started, but every trace drew taut, and in another second the four

horses were in full gallop, their hoofs ringing out on the road with the regularity of clockwork.

These are, however, generalities which will not help the beginner, and I do not imagine any one would attempt the difficulties of guiding a team until he had learned to drive one horse.

Before a man thinks of getting on the box and holding the reins, he ought first of all to know how to harness a horse. This, I am sorry to say, is often thought to be unnecessary, and there are many men who know how to drive, but who have not the slightest idea of harnessing the animal, or, when harnessed, joining him to the vehicle.

Men are perhaps a little ashamed of exhibiting their ignorance of these details, but, having everything to learn, a boy need have no scruples in asking for technical knowledge from those who are familiar with the subject in their everyday life. As I have said, in riding let him first of all learn all the usual methods that are employed, and then when he reaches riper years he can alter or adapt them in the way he thinks best.

Having mastered the difficulty of putting on a riding-bridle, you should find it easy to put on the same article used for driving, but remember that the collar comes first. This, I think, is generally the stumbling-block of those who have not previously attempted to harness a horse. The animal's head always appears to be so much bigger than the space through which it has to pass.

You will, of course, not attempt to harness a

horse until you have had considerable experience with a pony. The pony you ride will be none the worse for an occasional day between the shafts, and it will keep him from getting too fresh. I always thought that a drive for the sake of driving was very poor fun. To enjoy a drive one wants to have an object in view, besides the mere pleasure of sitting behind one horse or a pair.

Let us imagine you have three or four friends stopping with you, and you know some spot, say six or eight miles from home, where you would like to have a picnic. This is a good opportunity to show that you can harness your pony as well as drive him. I suppose it is unnecessary to tell you not to forget the eatables, but there are one or two things that might escape your memory. Here is a list that may assist you. A bucket (tin) to water the pony, and a feed of corn if you are going any distance. The food you take for yourselves should not be too elaborate, or it will spoil the fun of the thing. A kettle is the chief article, and you can carry the water in wine-bottles, which need not be brought back. A teapot, cups, loaf of bread, pot of jam, tea, and a bottle of milk are absolutely indispensable. A few knives and spoons will also add to your comfort, but the latter articles have a way of losing themselves on these occasions, and it is therefore as well they should not be of any great value. The materials for making and starting a fire must not be omitted, but they will depend a good deal on what can be gathered on the spot,

though it is always advisable to take some dry stuff to make a first blaze. See for yourself that a box of matches is included, as they are very frequently forgotten, the cook trusting to the butler to do it, and the butler trusting to some one else. Now then, harness your pony, pack in your things, and off you go.

I hope you will have found out the mysteries of harnessing before you start on this expedition, but I will take the opportunity of giving a few hints.

We will return to the collar, to which I have already referred. If the pony has a big head, or the collar is on the small side, you must take off the hames first. The hames are the metal portion of the harness, by which the traces join issue with the collar. Make the pony face you, then with a hand on each side of the collar, the small end down, give it a vigorous push and it will be over his head in a second. Once on the neck, you will find it quite easy to turn the collar round with the narrow part upwards, but before you do so it is advisable to buckle on the hames, as it is usual in England to buckle them at the narrow end, and it is difficult for a boy to reach the withers of a tall pony in order to perform this operation. If you find the pony's head does not slip easily through the opening, take the collar in both hands, put one knee in the inside and then place all your weight on it for a second.

Unless the pony is very quiet, it is advisable to tie his head up again whilst you put on the rest of

the harness. Buckle the hames on securely, so that there is no chance of them slipping, and then turn the collar round.

The adjustment of the crupper is very simple to those who are in the habit of harnessing horses, but it is by no means an easy task for others. There always appears to be some risk in standing at a horse's heels and taking liberties with his tail, but there is really no danger. Stand directly behind, take the tail in one hand, having previously doubled up the loose hair, then with a vigorous push raise it to an almost perpendicular position and slip on the crupper. See that there are no hairs caught up, and that the bight of the crupper is as far as it will go. If you do this part of your work in a half-hearted or hesitating sort of way, the pony will exert all his muscles to hold the tail down; but go at it boldly and he will allow you to do it at once. Of course, before putting on the crupper you will have laid the pad loosely on the pony's back, when all you have to do is to draw it forward and buckle underneath. Bridle and reins will then complete your task, but, as I have known people get muddled about the latter, a few words of instruction will not be out of place.

Take the reins where they meet in a bight and run your hands down to the buckle ends. This is merely to see that they are not twisted. Reeve each end, first through ring on pad, then ring on hames, and lastly buckle on to the bit.

Now that you have succeeded in getting the harness on, you will not find much difficulty in joining the pony to the cart, but you might get somebody near by to give you a little assistance. Raise the shafts, then pull the cart forward or back the pony, and insert the shaft ends in the tugs on the pad as far as the "stops," which are there to prevent them going any further back. Hook on the traces and buckle the bellyband, not too tight or too loose, but loose enough to give the cart a little play.

Unless you live in a very flat country I strongly advise you to use breeching, though you will find the majority of grooms have a rooted objection to it, their general substitute being a kicking-strap, which is of no possible use except to prevent a horse kicking. No boy ought ever to drive a horse or pony that is likely to kick, and a man is foolish willingly to sit behind an animal that has previously been guilty of this vice.

A kicking-strap may be of some use, when fastened at the right angle, as a preventive in breaking young horses, but is very seldom any help in holding down the vicious old when they really mean to kick.

Breeching is for the purpose of holding back a cart going down hill, and when it is not used the whole weight must come on the horse's tail. If you consider the matter, you will see that a horse's breech is the natural and best portion of his body for holding back a weight.

You must use your own common sense in finding out the place in the shaft for fastening the breeching, and also the exact tightness it should be buckled. On most carts you will see the metal staples for both breeching and kicking-straps, but I shall leave it to you to choose the right one. When you have finished putting the animal between the shafts, back him gently, and if the weight of the cart comes on the breeching and not on the stops, you will know that you have accomplished the feat correctly. There should be just a little play between breeching and traces, that is, when one is tight the other should be slack.

I may add that I consider a tub—low cart with door behind—is the best and safest conveyance for boys when they drive themselves.

However, we are wasting all the best of the day in talking, and it is time we started for the picnic. The provisions are packed, so that you can now jump in and drive away.

Let me earnestly entreat you not to play tricks while in charge of a horse.

If you are going any distance, do not go too fast at first, and always remember you have the same distance to come back. Different ponies have different rates of speed, but it is an excellent rule never to drive horse or pony quite up to his full pace if the journey is at all likely to be long. When you drive him beyond that speed he is certain to break into a canter, and will soon be

tired. Some ponies are naturally lazy, and will not trot up anywhere near their limit unless the whip is applied, but please remember there are others equally generous and willing, who are imbued with a spirit of gameness that is continually urging them on—this must be controlled. I have often heard a stupid groom, in reply to a remonstrance from his master about driving a horse too fast, say, “I never touched him with whip.” This sort of man thinks if he lets the horse go his own pace he cannot be accused of driving too fast, and it is such men that ruin high-spirited horses.

I feel certain that the reader I am addressing is not the sort to ill-treat dumb animals of any kind, and I am sure he will understand that when in charge of a horse the responsibility for its welfare is upon his own shoulders. Cruelty to animals is more often than not the result of thoughtlessness, at least I believe it is with boys, if not with men. If you will forgive me for preaching, I should like to point out that it is worse to be cruel to animals than it is to human beings. The Creator has put the animals in our power, and therefore under our protection. Horses have to work for us, and cattle have to die for us, but that is no reason why we should inflict any unnecessary suffering.

After considerable experience with animals of all sorts, I have come to the conclusion that each and every one has a distinct individual character. Bear this in mind, and study the characteristics of your pony or your dog. If there is any sympathy

in your nature you will understand them better, and they will look on you as a friend.

Whatever you may do in after years, I hope now you will look upon the whip as an instrument of punishment or a goad to further exertions, and when not required will allow it to repose quietly in the bracket. The smart coachman, or the man who considers himself an expert driver, always carries the whip in his hand, and would consider any one a duffer who did otherwise. I am in a minority, and therefore it is natural to suppose I must be wrong, but I shall still adhere to my opinion. I consider that the whip should only be used when the voice fails, and that a horse should always have the chance of responding to the voice before the lash is applied. The lazy and thick-skinned may not object to a stroke or two with the whip, but it is an insult to a high-spirited and willing horse. If a schoolmaster hit a boy to make him get on faster with his lessons without first speaking, that boy would feel justly aggrieved.

In discussing these details we have passed the time away whilst driving, and we now arrive at the spot you had chosen for the picnic. The last half-mile you drove quite slowly, so that the pony should not be too hot when you stopped. I ought to have added, before making a start, that the pony should have had a good strong halter underneath the bridle, and a feed of corn inside the cart.

You are captain of this outfit, so that you will have to give orders, but the welfare of the pony

must be your care. We will suppose it is the afternoon, and the long drive has made you ready for a cup of tea. One of your friends can help you take the pony out, the others you can send to collect sticks for the fire and get the kettle to boil.

The first thing to do is to tie up the reins to a ring on the pad, and after you have unhitched the horse you will take a double overhand knot in them, so that they will not drag on the ground. Then unbuckle the bridle from the bit on one side and slip it out of his mouth, take the halter in your hand, and lead him down to water. There may be a pool or stream handy, but, if not, you will have to find a pump or spring, and it was for that reason I advised you to bring a bucket. When the pony has quenched his thirst you will select a tree, and tie him securely to it with the halter, but he must be able to feed off the ground without being able to get a leg over the halter. Give him the feed of corn and then superintend the fire.

This is not a treatise on camping out or picnics, and if I write any more my editor will be calling me to order, but before I leave you to enjoy your outing there are two wrinkles I can give which may be useful. The first is, get a big log of wood and put on the weather side of your fire. The second is, your kettle should be over the fire and not resting on it.

Good "hands" are quite as important in driving as riding, and it requires an artist to make a horse really show himself to advantage. Driving with

the bent wrist is considered the correct style, and it has this advantage—you can get a more delicate feel of a horse's mouth ; but the average driver is much too heavy-fisted to appreciate why he does it.

For ordinary driving there is nothing better than a plain snaffle-bit, and if the pony cannot be held with that he is not fit for a young driver.

Driving-reins are much too heavy to get a really delicate touch on a horse's mouth, and for that reason I recommend an easy bit.

No one with any consideration for a horse ever thinks of using a bearing-rein.

A few final hints on horsemanship, and I have done.

Riding is an art that can only be attained by constant practice, and the man who tells you he felt quite comfortable the first time he was on the back of a horse, you may put down as a perverter of the truth. No one need despair, however hopeless he may feel in the saddle, and he may be certain others have felt equally awkward in the same position. Like everything else, it is much easier to acquire when young, but any one with determination and nerve can learn to ride, even if he has reached middle age.

Riding is not natural to the human being any more than swimming, and a man is as much at sea for the first time on a horse as he is in deep water. The boy acquires the knack of doing both without much trouble and without knowing how

he does it, but the adult must apply great patience and determination to overcome his fear of the strange position.

The bravest man, if unable to swim and thrown into the water, or put in the saddle for the first time, would show signs of fear. You ought therefore never to jeer at others for their evident nervousness in doing what may seem easy to you. In some other emergency they are likely to show greater bravery than you, and if it came to a tight place would save the situation by presence of mind where you might fail. Never put any one down as a funk because he fears a thing you do not. Some day you will meet something that frightens you, and then you will feel sorry for having laughed at that other man.

The natural fear we have of being on horseback is the first thing to be overcome, and the only way to gain confidence is to ride an animal that is absolutely quiet. When that confidence has once become firmly established you are on the high-road to make a good rider. Whether it is for the boy or the man of mature years who is beginning to ride, a horse should be selected that requires kicking along, and one that will not misbehave itself in any contingency which may arise. The steed that is eager to go and wants controlling, absorbs all the tyro's attention, so that he has no thought to spare for his seat, and will never reach the happy state of mind which is born of perfect confidence.

A riding-school is undoubtedly the best place for

first lessons, and the beginner should learn there to sit a horse without reins. It is of the utmost importance that a boy or man should get into the habit of balancing himself without the aid of reins. If all riders were made to go through a course of lessons on horseback without reins we should have many better horsemen, and the poor animals would not be tortured in the way they frequently are.

Some people are quick to learn, and others are equally slow, but it is in the power of every one to acquire a safe and firm seat if they will only take the trouble.

A graceful seat is always a question of taste or opinion, and it is one to which the object should never give a thought. I do not mean to infer that a graceful horseman is not pleasanter to look upon than an awkward one, but the man himself must never consider his riding from that point of view. All he has to learn is first of all to acquire a firm seat, and then with increasing confidence the position may become easy, but he must leave the outward appearance of his riding capabilities to be judged by others, and nothing he can do in that direction is likely to affect their decision.

A really easy and graceful style is seldom acquired by any one who has not begun to ride in early life, but that need never bother you, as you will get on the back of the horse for your own pleasure and not for that of onlookers.

Those who have not ridden much would hardly believe the faculty a horse has of understanding the

exact feelings of his rider, but whether this is conveyed by a touch on the reins or by the pressure of the leg I have never yet been able to decide. You may, however, be quite certain that the animal is fully aware of any fear or nervousness you entertain before you know it yourself. This is why horses which are irreproachable in their behaviour with some men will, when mounted by a nervous individual, perform all kinds of disconcerting antics, and make themselves generally unpleasant.

This sympathetic magnetism, or whatever it is, becomes a very powerful medium in the hands of a good rider, and he is able to convey his wishes to the animal he bestrides as quickly as his brain evolves them, whereas the bad or nervous rider imparts unconsciously only the fears he is imbued with.

This is one good reason why a horseman should never be vacillating or undecided, but always quick to make up his mind. If you do not know yourself what you want to do, the horse will become confused by the chaos in your mind, and will either get frightened or, if strong-willed, will assert his superiority and ever afterwards refuse to obey you. Man must supply the nerve and brain power; then, if he has a certain amount of experience, he will find the horse a willing servant. A horse with a nervous man on his back is like a ship without a rudder.

The horse is naturally a very nervous animal, and therefore the person who attempts to control

him ought to be particularly strong in that respect. I believe the majority of horses like to be controlled, and to feel that the human being guiding their actions is one they have confidence in as well as their respect. You must let them understand that you are the master and must be obeyed, but at the same time a master who will always be just, and never administer punishment that is undeserved.

It is a mistaken kindness not to correct a horse or punish him when he does wrong, as it is only an encouragement to him to continue in the error of his ways, and stronger measures will be required later on.

A man ought, however, to be a fairly accomplished rider before he attempts to coerce an unwilling horse by punishment, or any other means. There is one excellent rule I would have you ever bear in mind, and that is, never strike a blow in anger under the excuse of correction. This rule applies equally to those who have the management of either children, horses, or dogs.

When the occasion does arise, and your horse has to be punished, strike quick and strike hard. Half measures are useless, and serve to irritate rather than to correct.

Learn to use your left hand as well as the right. Pull the horse up and hit him whilst he is standing, as he only looks upon blows administered when he is moving as hints to go faster. Some horses have naturally much thicker skins than

others, and a blow that would drive another mad falls unheeded on their callous hides. You will see, therefore, that it is impossible to make any rule, and that the man who has the control of horses must exercise considerable discretion. Thoroughbred horses require more persuasion and less whip, whilst their phlegmatic brethren with the tinge of the hairy heel will take a hiding without resentment.

In ordinary riding on well-broken animals there are not many probabilities of getting falls, but if you ride to hounds across country you must expect to get down occasionally. The most unpleasant kind of tumble is, however, to be kicked off, and though we may all be subject to this indignity at some period of our lives, we never expect it to happen after we have passed the first rudiments of riding. Some people can see no difference between the humiliating "voluntary" and the honourable fall when the rider comes to the ground with his horse. Some one in the hunting-field may have been taking on an extra large-sized bit of timber, over which he comes to grief, and the next day we read in the paper, Mr. So-and-so was "thrown" from his horse.

If you fall with your horse over a fence, you may take no more hurt than if knocked over in the football-field. Stick to the saddle as long as you can, and when you find the position no longer tenable, roll yourself smartly out of the way. Don't lose your head or lose your hold of

the bridle. By holding on to the bridle you turn the horse's head towards yourself, and therefore his body farther away. There are moments when, of course, it is suicidal to cling on to the reins, but I should say more bad accidents happen from letting go than from hanging on. You have also no right to cause your friend to lose his place with hounds by going out of his way to catch your horse, which you ought never to have let go.

When you feel fairly confident that the man whose horse gallops by you riderless would not have let go the reins if he could help it, your duty is clearly to catch the animal at once. You may think it is an infernal nuisance, but like other unpleasant things it must be done, and you should remember the old adage, "Do as you would be done by."

If, however, you are in the front rank and hounds are running fast, the fallen one will forgive you for not stopping, supposing he is not in the same field, as you would then lose the run without benefiting him. It is a good rule always to help a comrade in the hunting-field when you can.

The best men and the best horses must sometimes come to grief if they follow hounds over a stiff country, but it should be your object to avoid falls if possible. The fence is an obstacle between you and the pack which you have to overcome, but if you fall over it the honours are divided between you and the fence. Do not ride for a fall,

but ride to get safely over, and your confidence will inspire the same feeling in the horse.

When there is no other place, you may sometimes have to negotiate an obstacle that appears well-nigh impossible for any horse to jump, and a fall appears to be the inevitable result. You must take your chance, ride boldly at it, and hope for the best. Always remember that however bold a horse may be he is naturally a timid animal, and most of his courage is communicated to him by his rider. It is better to get over a fence with a scramble and a tumble than not to get over at all.

Excepting those instances where the horse rolls over you, the worst falls are when you land on your head, and you may be suffering from a slight concussion without those who pick you up being aware of it. Spirits are then the worst thing you can take, and many accidents, which would have otherwise been attended with only trifling results, have been rendered serious by the ever-ready brandy flask. Therefore remember it is a mistaken kindness to offer any one who has had a fall a drink of either wine or spirits, because you cannot tell at the moment whether or not he has hurt his head. In a case of slight concussion the best plan is to go home and take a dose of cooling medicine, a very light meal—bread and milk for choice—without any spirituous liquor, and get into bed. The combined talent of the whole medical profession could not give you better advice than this.

I have not yet ever purchased myself any of the many patent safety-stirrups, but nevertheless I think they are excellent inventions, and no doubt lessen the risk of being hung up. To have a fall and to find your foot fast in the stirrup is a very unpleasant experience. I think perhaps it is the most dangerous position in which you can be placed by riding over fences, and anything that can minimise the risk is worth consideration. Here again the importance of holding on to the reins is manifest, for as long as you clutch them you can stop your horse from going far. When a man gets hung up by the foot and loses his hold of the reins, if the horse is the quicker to rise and moves on, he is left in a very helpless position, for no exertion on his part can set him free. The horse then gets frightened at the dangling human form and gallops away, kicking as he goes.

A horrible situation to contemplate, but one which you need not think about, if you take proper care. The foot will seldom stick fast if you use big, heavy stirrup-irons,¹ and spurs with only moderately long necks. I believe, in the majority of cases where people get hung up, the long spur is responsible. Sometimes it gets caught in the stirrup-leather, sometimes under the saddle-flap on the opposite side to which you fall, and occasionally it becomes

¹.¹ Through using stirrup-irons too small for me, I was once dragged, after a fall, for upwards of a hundred yards. I had the presence of mind to keep hold of the reins, and this probably saved me from having my brains kicked out.—ED.

hooked on to the reins. A loop or becket on the stirrup-leather is an excellent preventative for avoiding the first of these accidents.

One of the most unpleasant tricks a horse can have is that of rearing, as the rider can do nothing but hang on to the mane. I have before mentioned that no boy or beginner should be allowed to ride an animal unless it is free from all vices, but some day you may be mounted on a horse that gets up on its hind legs, and it is as well for you to know what to do in such an emergency.

The instinct of self-preservation prompts you to clutch the reins in order to avoid slipping out of the saddle, but instinct in this case would lead you into further trouble. If, when the horse is balancing on its hind feet, you pull on the reins, you must pull him over backwards and very likely on top of you.

You must get it impressed on your mind that if a horse rears, your first action is to drop the reins and hold on by the mane, the saddle, or even put your arms round his neck, but let the reins go at once.

I have known first-rate hunters, afflicted with a little twist in the temper, that would, on occasions of ill-humour or annoyance, rear straight up on end, to the confusion and discomfiture of their riders. If you happen to own one of this description, you will find it a good plan to have a loose strap on the neck, which you can hold on by directly he commences his tricks.

My very kind and patient editor, when he asked me to write this book,¹ said it was to be for boys, but made no mention of girls. Nearly all I have written here is, however, quite as applicable to the one as to the other, and though I have written chiefly to a boy, I hope his sister will find the hints I have given are useful to her also.

All girls ought to learn to sit astride of a horse, and it would be better for them if they never rode in a side-saddle until they were over fifteen. The unnatural position in which a side-saddle puts a woman must be bad for the adult, but it must be positively injurious to the health of a growing girl.

There has been a good deal of discussion on this subject, and without any satisfactory result, but I am not going to re-open it now. In all probability, before we get to the end of this century the side-saddle will become as out of date as a sedan chair. Doctors and fathers may go on talking to the end of the chapter, but unless a costume can be contrived which a woman considers is becoming, she will never adopt a man's method of riding.

However, I am here addressing myself to the young girl, who is too sensible to worry about how she looks. If you have plenty of brothers at home and some friends in the district, you should get your parents to organise a boy and girl polo club. The

¹ I certainly have never been concerned in a book written with more sincerity and knowledge of the subject than these chapters by Mr. J. Otho Paget.—ED.

ponies should not be over thirteen hands ; the ball should be rubber-covered, and the sticks light. You might have lots of fun in this way, and it would improve your riding more than anything. The excitement of the game would make you forget about riding, when you would lose fear and gain confidence.

There is one advantage in a side-saddle, and that is, when a woman has learnt to ride in it she feels so secure that, unlike a man, she does not want to balance herself by the reins. This is the chief reason why the majority of women have better "hands" than men ; that and perhaps a greater delicacy of touch, combined with a knowledge of their own want of muscular power.

Whilst the fashion still remains for a woman to sit sideways, it is as well not to be different from every one else, and you must try to acquire a good seat. Sit in the middle of the saddle, and let your weight fall directly over the horse's backbone. The slightest bearing to one side or the other will give him a sore back. The saddle should not be higher over the withers than it is anywhere else, or by raising your knee it will give you an ugly seat. Some very good riders ride with the left leg perfectly straight, but I do not quite understand how they can have a firm seat. A woman's grip depends on the pommel and the stirrup. She must press down with her foot on the stirrup and upwards with her leg against the pommel, thereby getting a very strong leverage, which, when properly

understood, will hold her safely in the saddle however much the horse may kick.

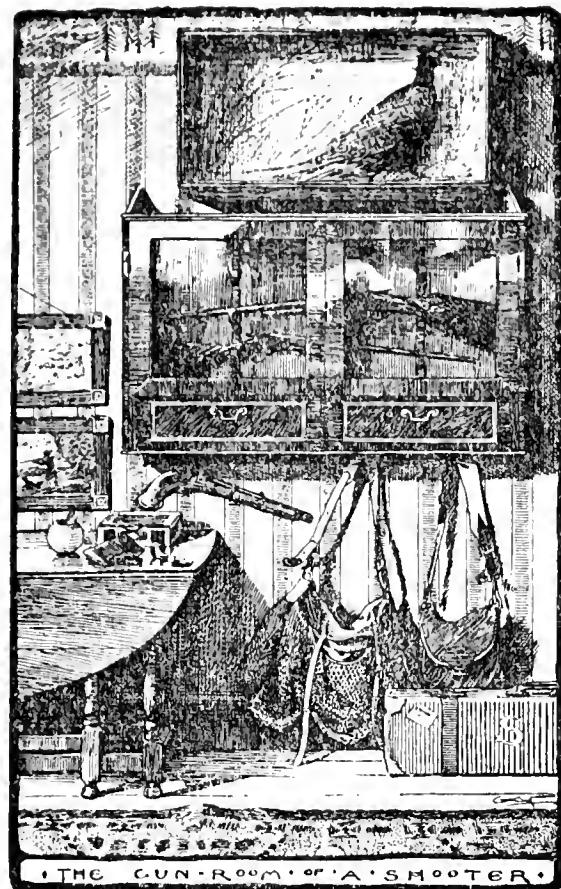
The left leg from below the knee should hang straight down, and, except when it is necessary to take a strong grip, it should not quite touch the pommel. See that your heel does not touch the horse's ribs and irritate him.

A woman ought always to sit straight in the saddle, and if she is feeling tired she had better go home ; but if she ever allows herself to loll, she will become an eyesore to her friends, and a saddle-sore to her horse. First of all you have to learn to sit plumb in the middle of the saddle, and after that you can get into the way of sitting there easily, without stiffness and without poking your head. You will have to be an extraordinarily bad rider if you cannot find one man to admire your style of riding, and extraordinarily good if you hope to evade the criticism of your own sex. Beyond these few hints, which are alone applicable to girls, my advice to boys holds good for both.

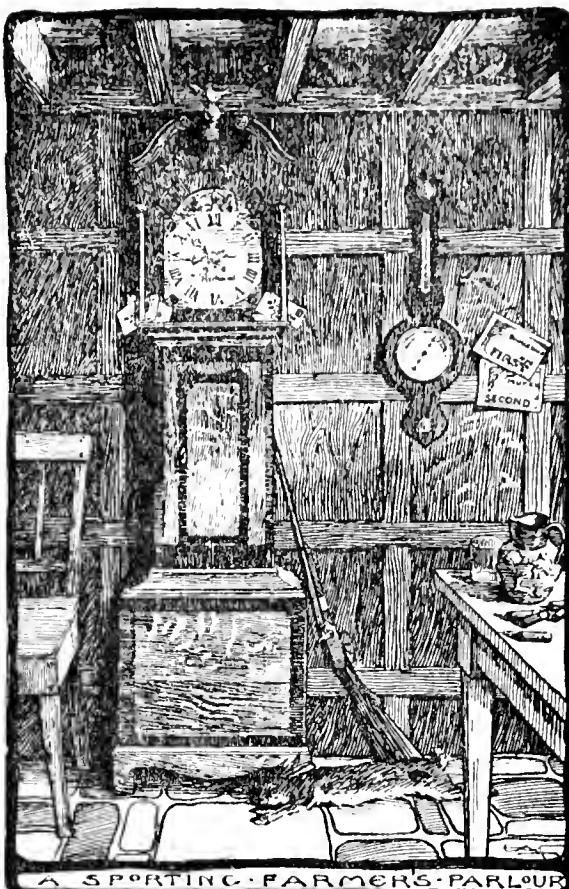
PART II.—GUNS

BY GEORGE A. B. DEWAR





• THE GUN-ROOM • OF A SHOOTER.



A SPORTING-FARMERS-PARLOUR

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING TO SHOOT : AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE GUN

WHAT has become of the gun the gardener's boy used to shoot the poll-jays with when they came after the peas? It was the first gun I fired off. It seems a long time since the days of that gun. When you think of such days and try to tell of them, it is hard to help writing in such a way that people may be led to suppose you are quite old. It

is possible to be quite young, to feel even younger than you actually are, until you go back to the first rabbit you snared or shot, the first blackbird's nest you knew of, the first butterfly you netted ; then you do begin to feel a little antique. So many things have happened since then, so many fresh interests have come crowding into a man's life, so many new friends made, and—that it should be so !—so many old friends lost. I have a wretched memory for many things, but that first gun is unforgettable. It was unquestionably Brummagem. It was a single-barrel, a long barrel that was not by any means straight. A friend, whom I was telling about this gun the other day, said, "By Jove ! not straight ? I shouldn't have cared to shoot with it. How was it that it didn't burst ?" Frankly, I should not care to let that gun off to-day, unless I were to see a shot or two fired safely with it by somebody else just before. But that is because I have since grown quite accustomed to straight barrels made of harder material. The gun was safe enough when properly loaded, and its killing power was remarkable when you held it straight. Of course it was a muzzle-loader. In our parts breech-loaders were by no means general then. My tutor used to hire a pin-fire breech-loader then, and pot rabbits with it as they sat out in the rides in summer nibbling the grass. The pin-fire, I should say, is deader to-day by far than the old muzzle-loader ; it had, perhaps, one advantage—it was very easy to tell when it was

loaded. Now it was sometimes rather a nice point whether or not the keeper's muzzle-loader was charged. If at the end of the day there remained a charge in the gun, this was commonly not drawn; the trigger was gently let down upon the cap, and the gun hung up or set in a corner. So, until you had pulled back the trigger of the muzzle-loader in the corner, you might not be able to tell for sure whether it was loaded or not. Cases did occur, moreover, in which the cap was removed and the charge left undrawn, and then you might only be able to say for certain whether the gun were loaded or unloaded by probing with the ramrod.

Hence accidents occurred from time to time—to put it mildly—with these old guns. There was the case of one man in our parts who loaded or unloaded without taking the cap off the nipple—gamekeepers, for instance, had often a great objection to wasting a good cap—the gun “went off,” and sent the ramrod through the centre of his hand. On the whole the old muzzle-loader in the corner of the parlour of a neighbouring farmer—an old friend of mine whom I shall speak more of presently—was a thing to handle circumspectly. Once it had been in its corner, loaded, for many weeks. At length it was taken out in view of a day's shooting. The question was what would happen when it was fired? I have a dim recollection that somebody fastened it into a gate and pulled a bit of string attached to the trigger—a precaution against a possible bursting of the barrel.

Then there was the second gun I shot with. The first, as related, was a single-barrel, and I seem to remember that it passed hands for about thirty shillings about the time of my acquaintance with it. The second was a double-barrel, belonging to the gamekeeper whom my brother employed when he wanted a more active man than our old family retainer, who had long filled the place, to rear the pheasants. It was altogether a more important weapon, and I found it rather heavy. I believe I potted a rabbit or two with that gun when the keeper would let me have some shots. Once or twice I enticed the keeper to let me have a few shots at ferreted rabbits. But, after I had missed two or three rabbits bolted by the ferret, he grew impatient, and talked about wasting time and powder. My impression is I did not get much sport out of that gun. It was better fun using the saloon pistol, but the wonder now is how we never did grievous injury to somebody with that pistol. As we never seemed to go near hitting birds on the trees or sitting rabbits with the saloon pistol, we grew quite careless in using it. It was not bad fun putting a bullet now and then through the lead of the tower which held the bell over the stables: you could see the little round hole the bullets made there, and there was some satisfaction in this.

Before we leave the muzzle-loading guns of my boyhood, a word as to ammunition and method of loading. There is no doubt that the old

powder-flask was rather an ingenious contrivance ; the sound of the shot rattling down the barrels, too, was attractive. Wads were quite in the nature of luxuries. We used to load with scraps of newspaper, white or brown, in place of wads, whilst, at a pinch, leaves, green or dead, would serve.

These experiences with the muzzle-loaders belong to very early gunning days—to the time when I could only expect a stray shot now and then, and when the gardener's boy was not weeding rather than poll-jay-openly or rabbit-on-the-sly shooting, or when the keeper was in a good-natured mood. They are odds and ends pertaining perhaps more to the bird-nesting and the catapulting period than to the gunpowder and shot. I did not, as it were, graduate a gunner till a year or two later, when my brother got a new central-fire breech-loader, and gave his old one to me. Then all at once I was fairly in the thick of it. My gun was a twelve-bore central-fire with rebounding hammers, which—being short of ready money—I parted with long before it was worn out.

I used to take that gun about with me to places, and at times when there was little chance of shooting. I took it to college, for instance, and kept it proudly in my rooms. It was only used twice there, and neither occasion redounded in the least to my credit. Once after dark, for a lark, I fired it between quads—pointing well up into the air of course, in the direction of Christ Church Meadows —the idea of myself and my conspirators being

to "draw" the "dons." It made a fearful noise among the stone buildings, and the smoke from the black powder hung about suspiciously near my rooms; but curiously enough no don would be drawn that night. The other time I used it was at a trap shooting-match, and very feeble sport that was: you don't care for sport with captive creatures; it is not the real thing.

At the time I got this gun I was at home, and being coached by a tutor who lived about five miles away. To him I used to ride most days in the week. On my return home each day I generally found there was enough daylight left for me to get my gun and cartridges and hurry into the woods after rabbits or wood-pigeons. The rides to and fro between my woodland home and my tutor's form together one of the loneliest passages of my life. Many boys would no doubt jump at such a chance of horseback exercise, but on my return in the afternoons my chief desire was generally to get home as quickly as possible, so as to lose no more shooting time than could be prevented. And riding came perhaps to be connected overmuch with book work, and so somewhat to lose the place it earlier had in my boy affections.

In those days I was shooting chiefly in the woods, though we had some very fair partridge-shooting two miles or so from home, which on and off I went in for from September to the last day in the season. Rabbiting was our mainstay at home, and is to this day. I am in the middle of a rabbit-shooting week

as I write now, the daily party consisting of one gun—myself—a gamekeeper and four dogs (two terriers and two spaniels), and am every bit as keen on the sport to-day as when I handled my first breech-loader.

Much of my early shooting was in the nature of a solitary sport. This had its advantages and its drawbacks. Sporting constantly without a companion, you have probably not quite the stimulus which the natural and wholesome competition of a companion of about your own age will give. Probably I should have excelled more in the gun if I had been often matched, as it were, against a friendly rival of my own standing. I had fame as a rabbit shot—strictly a local fame, be it understood—when a youngster. Gamekeepers, gardeners' boys, and folk generally about the place declared, after I had shot for a season or two, that I was “just about a one to cut them (*i.e.* rabbits) over.” This tradition took root, and to this day strangers are wont to accost me as a strong performer with the gun. They should see me some days when I am just behind or just over—it is much more often behind than over—rabbit after rabbit: when rabbits going across, offering perfect broadside shots, rabbits going straight away, rabbits coming towards the gun, alike seem so very hard to stop. Emulation might well have made me a better performer. It would possibly have helped to prevent me growing into a shy shot. Thanks largely no doubt to the spirit of emulation, I learned to play billiards and pyramids

“to a gallery”; far and away the best games I have played have been in the semi-final and final rounds of tournaments and handicaps. But shooting I do better when I am my own critic. However, there are compensations. An Englishman, whose views in many things inspire conviction, said to me that a spirit of competition, if it entered into his angling, would mar his enjoyment; that a feeling of independence, or complete indifference as to whether some other angler on the same water made better baskets of trout, was necessary to such enjoyment. There is wisdom in this. To be able to shoot or angle the entire day, without the least thought of whether or not we are likely to be beaten by some other gunner or fisherman, and yet to enjoy one's successes and regret one's failures keenly—this is proof that we are doing the thing for the sheer love of it; that there is in us that enthusiasm which we should bring to bear on all we undertake in life, business and pleasure alike.

I have described my early shooting as being in the nature of a solitary sport. A gamekeeper, or some “odd hand” employed on the place, who might volunteer to come out and carry game and beat for an hour or two, scarcely counts in this connection. It is true that soon after beginning I was able, if I liked, to get up occasional shooting-parties, composed of a few farmers and others in the district who could shoot, and who moreover could bring a dog or two; and great fun those jolly, unconventional parties used to be. How well were

wont to cut short the luncheon of bread and cheese and beer, and what zest there was in the woodcock shilling sweepstake ! What ardent sportsmen would some of the farmers turn out to be, whom ordinarily you might have taken to be men who cared for nought but turnips and dung ! And one did feel so important, so large, as the originator of those shooting-parties, as the general who decided what the strategy should be. Farmers, however, cannot shoot every day ; keepers must be looking to their wires, watching poachers, trapping vermin ; gardeners' boys must mainly weed. So that far more often it was a solitary shoot. Nearly always taking with me two light spaniels, far from finely bred dogs, but capital rabbiters, and quite equal to winding and putting up a woodcock or a skulking hen pheasant—the cock birds, particularly the older ones, were inveterate runners in the higher wood—I would choose now the young wood of a few years' growth, now the blackthorn thickets and rows on the common, now the scattered furze-bushes, sometimes even the high wood of from eight or nine to fourteen years' growth, where in those days one generally managed to fall in with a hare or two, which have come to be so scarce latterly in our parts.

It was on one of these solitary expeditions that I got my first woodcock ; he rose from some dead bracken which had not yet been beaten to the ground by frost and snow of winter : it seemed too good to be true when he fell dead

in the open. Some may say that there is not in shooting with the sporting gun, at any rate shooting in England, a sensation equal, in the pleasure it yields, to a perfectly successful stroke with the cricket bat, or the golf driver or brassey. The gratification you experience as you put your hand over your eye on a bright day to watch the soaring flight of the little white ball, till it falls just in the right line a hundred and sixty or a hundred and eighty yards away, is certainly ample ; and when the right spot exactly in the bat—even the veriest bungler with the bat has felt this—meets the cricket ball, it does impart to you a sensation worth lingering over in thought. Now a hard shot clearly and neatly brought off may possibly not be quite equal in the satisfaction it yields —given a golfer and a gunner equal in keenness over their respective pursuits—to the perfectly successful drive ; for one thing it is over sooner ; there is nothing here which quite corresponds to that serene watching of the ball as it soars from your smite. Mind I only say “possibly,” for are there not pretty shots brought off in the face of difficulties, that are remembered years afterwards ? You will be able, very likely, twenty years hence, not only to remember, but even to point out the exact spot where you brought off a hard right and left at birds or at rabbits—these latter, by the way, do not nearly so often, in most places, yield right and left shots as partridges, pheasants, or grouse ; but when they do, the

sport is truly stimulating. And many single shots will in like manner have a place in your life's sporting memories.

The shots missed altogether or only half done, they are as the foozled strokes at golf, only one may recall them longer and with slightly more regret. The memory of sport, indeed, forms no small part of the joy of it. The pleasure is not over when you put by the gun for the season, even for the rest of your life. It is delightful to dwell in less active moments on scenes and incidents in past shooting-days, to exchange sporting gossip and anecdote with the boon companion. Colonel Hawker, the master of the old school of shooters in England who wrote on their sport, must have rejoiced in the writing of his sterling book, "Instructions to Young Shooters," though he allowed himself little enough of sentiment; and in books of to-day, such as Sydney Buxton's "Fishing and Shooting," the joy that lives in the sporting memory must be felt by every reader.

We were saying that there were compensations for the lonely shooter, and memory recalls the fact that being so often solitary made me the readier, during these sporting expeditions in woods and on farm lands, to improve my acquaintance with Nature. You need not by any means be unob servant of natural beauties and natural history because you are a member of a shooting party, and are enjoying the good fellow- and companion-ship that go so well with a sport like shooting. But, with-

out any disrespect to such gatherings, often as lively in their way as fox-hunting ones, one may say safely that Nature, in wood and wild, has a shy way of disclosing her full beauty rather to those who roam alone than to those who are a jocund company. So these quiet shoots in the coppice and in the fields of autumn, down in the oozy marsh and high on the wind-swept heath, are very favouring to those who want to keep in touch with Nature as well as to enjoy to the full the use of the gun. For myself, I have found shooting in this respect only less favourable than trout-fishing. It helped me as a boy to recognise that even the days in winter, which we are wont to call dreary, are never without charm for those who are not distressed by rain or mist or snow. I have gone out with my gun when the snow has lain more than a foot deep, and when the tops of the high hedges against which it has drifted have been all but hid ; when there has been a continuous downpour all day long ; when a heavy cold mist or fog has made the cock pheasants crow, and so confused the flocks of wood-pigeons, that they have flown towards me when I have suddenly come upon them. I have been chilled, and chapt, and soaked to the skin, and my boots have been water-logged and snow-logged—my boots when I first shot always did let in the water somehow—and I can honestly say I have thoroughly enjoyed myself on such occasions, and seen many beautiful things. Why, Sir Edward Grey in his

angling book says that when soaked to the skin by rain, one enjoys a feeling of intimacy with Nature ! Who would not sometimes be soaked ? It is then you may feel a little of the elemental man in you. And how, if you always were to run away from the elements and keep dry indoors, could you grow hardy and seasoned ? It is part of the business of the British boy to lay in such a store of hardness as shall serve him well in later life. It is not the least thing that can be said for shooting, that when taken up early in life, it does in many cases help to give a man the toughness and endurance which almost may be called a virtue.

I have touched on the danger of the old-fashioned muzzle-loader. Let me now give you some advice as to how to avoid accidents when handling the guns of to-day. Our modern guns are safer to handle than were our ancestors'. Yet most seasons we read or hear of some grisly mishap out shooting. With few exceptions these accidents, like the fatal adventures of Alpine climbers, are the results of ignorance or of downright wanton carelessness. I have had more than twenty years' experience of rough shooting in very thick places, where one often loses sight of one's neighbours, and yet it is my strong feeling that accidents even here always can be avoided by great care : and how shall we describe the conduct of the man who does not exercise great care out shooting ? I have seen a few lesser accidents in

covert shooting, and the feeling they give one is of a sickening character. I can just recollect—at the time I was but a very small spectator—one accident in which tragedy and comedy were perilously near to being mingled. We had one or two white pheasants—freaks or varieties—among the birds reared and turned out into the “shoots.”¹ My old friend D——n, a good-hearted, peppery farmer near by, who later was often my shooting companion, was anxious to get one of these birds: no doubt he thought it would look well in a glass case in his parlour next to the stuffed green wood-pecker; there was a gentleman out with us on that 1st of October, who wore a tall white or grey hat. Suddenly, just after a shot had been fired, this gentleman ducked. Presently asked why, he replied that his object was to avoid a possible second barrel. It turned out that some shots had actually passed through the white hat. D——n was well known as a somewhat explosive gunner; nobody doubted that he had taken the white hat for a white pheasant, and fired accordingly. At lunch the affair was mentioned, and Colonel E—— put the wise question to the owner of the injured hat—who chanced to be a doctor—“Now, must those few shot have proved fatal if they had passed through your head?” I have wondered, since poor old D——n passed away, how in the world we could ever have borne him out shooting. He was an extremely bad shot, and, when he could not

¹ “Shoots” are young underwood of only a few years’ growth.

bag anything, would lose his temper and even order the keeper to take and smash his gun to bits. Fortunately he often lost his spectacles in the thickets, and would stay behind searching for them. D——n was a man to give a wide berth to. He had shot various dogs in his day. It is horrid to hear the shot of the reckless gunner rattle in the underwood about one. The reckless gunner reminds one of the reckless jester ; the latter will not let his best friend stand between himself and his witticism ; the reckless gunner will not spare his best friend if the latter stands between him and the rabbit.

Some people are too amiably disposed towards the reckless gunner. The story of the beater who casually remarked to another beater, "Lord, how that gentleman there do put it into my gaiters!" is almost typical of the countryman who bears gladly with the gun fool. There are people who really seem to think that a little peppering is all in the day's sport : it is easier to understand the temper of the man who, on being peppered, ordered the gunner who fired that shot to hold up his hand, with the object of inflicting condign punishment on the offender.

Rabbit-shooting in thick places, where the members of the line cannot see one another by any means always, and where the line itself must often tend to become irregular, necessitates great care on the part of every gun. Make an absolutely hard and fast rule of never shooting down the line, even

though you are morally sure from the nature of the ground that your charge will not scatter or glance. Get into the way of keeping yourself well informed as to the position of your right-hand and left-hand neighbours when you are slowly advancing with beaters or dogs, or both, in a line intended to be as regular as possible. Though, in rabbit-shooting in thick woods and commons, the bulk of every charge may safely enter the ground, especially when the ground is soft and covered by decaying dead leaves—the nearer you are to the rabbit (and I take it that the majority of rabbits in thick cover are killed at from, say, fifteen to five-and-twenty yards) the likelier is this to occur—you must never forget the *glance shot*. Though some of the force of this shot will necessarily be spent when it glances, it can do grave, even the gravest, harm. I have been stung by several glance shot myself, and, much worse than that, a glance shot from a charge fired by myself did, I cannot with courtesy doubt, once touch a neighbour. I shot at a rabbit which could not have been in a line with my neighbour, yet he called out that somebody had shot him. I was in the thick, he in the open. I ran out, half incredulous and half sick with horror. Infinitely relieved, I found him upright, more excited than hurt. He believed he had been hit in the thigh. It was a matter of a single glance shot, so I gathered; but I hope I am right in saying that—like the glance shot which once struck me also on the thigh, some of which I found in my

sock at night when I undressed—it did not pierce the skin.

As to keeping yourself informed where the two guns on either side of you are, it is not, of course, always easy. When my brother and I are shooting alone we constantly, by calling, keep in touch with each other in thick covert; and, to some extent, this is practicable where there are more guns than two. It has, no doubt, this disadvantage: game, furred and feathered, will often hear one's voice and avoid one. This is especially the case in rabbit-shooting with dogs. In walking through the covert you stop now and then at favourable open spots, and wait in order to get a clear shot at a rabbit, which, pressed by the dogs, will very likely cross there. After long experience of a wood or common you come to know all the best spots to take your stand at when the dogs are giving tongue. It goes against the grain, having reached such a spot, to call even in a low voice to your neighbour out of sight, or to respond to his call, "Where are you, So-and-So?" Rabbits creeping about in the fern and brambles near by will, hearing your voice, be very shy of crossing the open space, and, even with the dogs or beaters hot upon them, will turn back or aside. Hence I have known keen sportsmen object to call at all in covert. But we do it at home, and we manage to get plenty of sport, plenty of shots of all descriptions at rabbits going at all paces. I like them best (though I may not get them oftenest) when they are going as hard as they can pelt.

If you are by yourself shooting rabbits, ferreted or driven by dogs out of hedges, never shoot into the hedge if there is the faintest likelihood of there being any one, hidden from you, on the other side. When two or more guns are shooting, one or more on either side of a hedge, never shoot into the hedge at all. I lay this down as a rule which ought to have no exceptions whatever. Don't be tempted by the deadly rabbit which is creeping or running along in the hedge. Wait till it comes into the open field, which it may for a few yards at any rate, even if to retire precipitately a few seconds later ; it will be a cleaner, a more sporting, and a far *safer* shot in the open.

What I have said so far relates to the safety of the human members—shooters, beaters, and game-keepers—of the shooting party. I turn now to the canine members, who deserve much more consideration than some shooters seem always ready to extend to them. When there are many dogs, and the covert is thick and rabbits abound, it is right to be very careful and sternly to decline a good many alluring shots. A few hours before writing this I was shooting with dogs. Three or four times I half got up my gun for a shot at a rabbit going hard, but dropped it ; as many times I did not even half swing at the rabbit. In both cases the deterrent was the same—one or more dogs inconveniently near the rabbit as it bolted. Several of these rabbits might have been killed without a dog being hit, but it seemed to me

in each case that there was risk, and I did not choose to take it. After all, a good dog is worth several score of rabbits, and besides there is always something more than the mere financial question—the value in pounds, shillings, and pence of the dog—to be considered. To pepper a dog is a deed to be ashamed of ; it will even make you unhappy and uneasy with the gun for some time afterwards, though when you shot you had no means of knowing a dog was in a line with the rabbit.¹ You may sometimes find it practicable to shoot at a rabbit though a perfect pack of dogs are at its heels. In such cases you do not shoot over the dogs or just in front of them, but you take the rabbit as he twists off from the dogs at something like a right angle from them ; these are pretty shots, and, given a steady performer with the gun, safe ones.

What I have said against shooting at rabbits in cover in a dangerous way of course applies equally to all ground game ; it applies also to *low flying* birds. Woodcocks occasionally fly very low indeed ; pheasants, too, will fly low down the line : leave these alone ; do not point at them. Let your rule in this matter be of iron. Let no bet cause you to relax. But, by the way, I advise you never to bet about your own shooting. It is bad enough when other folk bet about you. It is Mr. Rider Haggard

¹ Dogs now and then in very thick places, *especially dogs which do not give tongue*, get hit through no gross carelessness on the part of the shooter, but such cases are happily rare.

who tells the tale of the man who was disconcerted at finding himself watched by a knot of miners at a pheasant drive. He missed several shots, when one of the miners said in effect to him, "I have put another bob on you, master, and if you miss the next bird, I'll knock yer bloomin' head off!"

A few general rules aimed at safety may be given here. If you are not prepared to obey them in the spirit and the letter, you ought not to handle a gun at all. (1) Never point a gun, loaded or unloaded, at anybody; it is a fool's game. (2) Do not load your gun till the start is actually made. (3) Unload directly the shooting is over. (4) In going through hedges, over gates, &c., take great care not to let the barrels of your gun point towards any part of your own person, or towards any one else who is out with you; and let your gun be at half-cock. (5) When you leave off shooting at the luncheon-time, unload your gun. (6) When you prepare to move with your companions from one beat to another, put your gun at half-cock. (7) In moving from beat to beat, carry your gun under your right or left arm with the barrels pointing to the ground, or over one of your shoulders with the barrels *not* pointing at right angles from your back, but at something like an angle of forty-five above your back. (8) Never shoot down the line. (9) Never shoot unless you are sure there is no one in the line of fire. (10) Remember glance shot; remember glance shot.

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Before undertaking to write on shooting, the question suggested itself, how far was I qualified to help the beginner with advice and experiences? Looking over my own qualifications, I find that the only shooting I can write of with knowledge is of a simple kind. Important days with pheasants, where everything is organised scientifically, I know practically nothing of; nor have I ever shot a driven grouse. So I intend saying nothing of these branches of the sport. To write of them I should have to draw largely from other books, which would be poor fun. Mr. Portman will tell of those branches in a chapter on advanced shooting that follows; and, if skill with the gun and an experience of the chief shoots in the country count, you could hardly find a stronger guide.

This chapter will deal with shooting of a much less ambitious sort, of wild pheasants and of partridges for the most part walked up, of the wood-pigeon, of an occasional hare and woodcock; above all, of rabbiting by the aid of dogs alone, or of dogs with two or three beaters, and of ferreting. Sometimes we shall be among the clover and the sainfoin and swedes in autumn, at others ferreting the hedge-banks and the burrows in the coppices and high wood, or visiting the furze-bushes on the commons, where the rabbits lie out when the cows and cowboys have not been too much about. We shall stalk rabbits, too, in the glades and woodland paths in summer, either with a gun or a rook rifle, and lie in wait for the great flocks of wood-pigeons

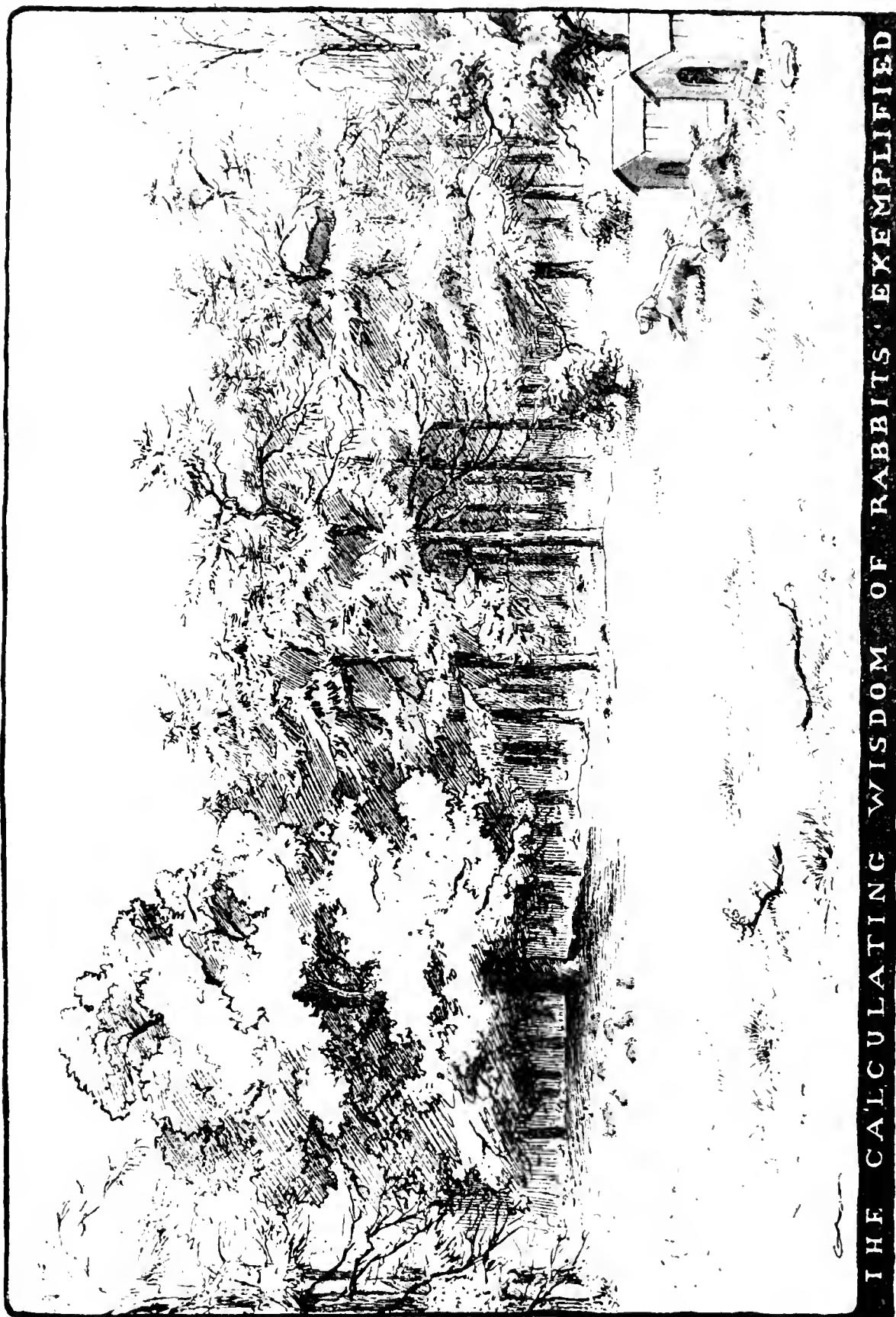
on bitter winter evenings. And this I pledge myself to—I will not copy anything out of the books, but will talk only of things that many's the time I have done myself, and joyed in the doing.

Potting rabbits as they sat nibbling the short grass in the woodland paths, or rides as we often call them, was the way I began ; and it is the way, I imagine, in which some thousands of young shooters begin every year. You spy the rabbit a hundred yards off or so, and creep up very craftily till you are within range, say forty yards. Then, while he is nibbling, you raise the gun to the right shoulder, close the left eye with tremendous determination, look along the line between the barrels with the right eye till the little round sight at the end covers the rabbit. Finally, you pull the trigger.

It is rather a cold-blooded way of shooting compared with the way we shall turn to directly, but as a first step in shooting I do not know that you can better it. You may practise no doubt, too, at paper targets pinned up among the stems of underwood or against trees—if the tree owner does not object ; but, to shoot running or flying game well, the practical way is to begin by shooting sitting rabbits, or, when you can find them, sitting wood-pigeons. Blackbirds, thrushes, and other singing and small perching birds you should let be ; they are such little fellows for a great charge of number 5 or 6 shot, such as we shall use throughout these chapters.

It is an easy thing this shooting of the sitting

THE CALCULATING WISDOM OF RABBITS EXEMPLIFIED



rabbit at thirty or even forty yards distance.¹ But not quite so simple always to lay him stone dead, even though you have a double-barrel and fire the left, which is a choke bore and carries the charge closer for a slightly longer distance, so that it strikes with deadlier effect. The object always is to shoot your game in the head. So you aim at that, even in the longer shots where the charge must scatter and strike other parts as well as the head.

In potting the rabbits or pigeons as they sit, get into the way of (1) holding the gun firmly against the shoulder, and (2) grasping the gun as far down the barrel or barrels as you conveniently can. At one time I got into the bad habit of holding the gun not firmly enough to the shoulder in shooting at running and flying game—especially running rabbits which offered swift snapshots—and it was hard to break myself of the fault. Holding loosely to the shoulder will affect your aim, and if there is much “kick” in the powder, it will, it is quite likely, make your right jaw tender after you have fired many cartridges. It is not workmanlike to hold the gun thus loosely, and it may give folk the notion—not necessarily a right notion—that you are not a good man to be near in covert. As to the second point, this is essential too. If you hold the gun with your left hand too near the stock, you will not have the necessary power over it; it will be

¹ That is, after you have stolen within range of or stalked him. The stalk is an exciting thing in many branches of sport.

ill-balanced in your hands, and things will go all wrong to a certainty. Let the left arm be straightened out as much as it conveniently can, and then, when the gun rests between the thumb and fingers of that hand (the hold being of course round the barrels underneath), it will be well under command; ease and steadiness will be the result. There is as much in the grip of the gun as in the grip of the golf driver, only there is practically but one way of gripping the former.

Among those who do not shoot, and have not watched shooting with the shot-gun, there is a somewhat prevailing notion that, to shoot flying or running objects, the gunner lays his cheek against the stock, shuts the left eye, and peering down the barrels fires only when he has covered the object with the sight. But, if this were the method of the sportsman, he would have to restrict himself to large objects travelling slowly! The truth is, you don't use the sight at all when you shoot rabbits running or birds flying. Then how is it done? There is so much about the process of achieving a hard shot at a running or flying mark, which is what may be termed sub-conscious,¹ that it seems to me very difficult to depict it in words. The gun is raised, *swung* with firmness and ease to the spot

¹ Take the pulling of the trigger. The forefinger pulls the front trigger for the first barrel and the back for the left without the shooter thinking of the thing at all. Once for a long while I somehow had the habit of pulling the back trigger first, and so of making my left barrel my opening one. I was as sub-conscious in this case as the other.

where the moving object is or will be in less than a second, and fired. The cheek is laid against the stock, as it is in the case of shots at stationary objects, and the eye without doubt takes a lightning survey along the barrels, though it does not seek the sight, and there is no thought on the part of the shooter of getting that sight exactly between the eye and the moving object. To me the perfect union or working together of arm and eye in shooting is a marvel—a mystery. We see much the same partnership of course in other pursuits and games—in billiards, in golf, in cricket, in croquet, for instance. In some games it is hard to say which is the chief, which the junior partner. In dry-fly fishing the hands, wrists, and arms, I suppose, constitute the senior partner ; but where would that senior be without the junior ? And ah how badly, when one is shooting, they do run in double harness at times ! One begins to think in disgust that the partnership is dissolved for good, that it were best to take out the cartridges and go home.

It is obvious that if you shoot straight at a small object travelling fast, on the ground or in the air, you will be liable to hit the ground or the empty air rather than the moving object, which will have passed the spot by the time the trigger has been pulled and the charge has arrived there. The charge scatters a good deal, if the distance is, say, thirty or forty yards, so that the sphere of danger for the object fired at is considerably enlarged ;

but you should not count on this : you *must* be ahead of the swiftly moving object fired at to succeed in shooting. It would be possible, I suppose, by mathematics to show the distance you must be ahead of a moving object travelling at a given pace, taking into account the distance and the rate the charge travels, &c. But such precision would not be of the least practical use to the shooter. The shooter, when he takes a snapshot at a rabbit moving swiftly in covert, does not want mathematical calculations as to these matters. In my experience, he swings the gun at the rabbit and shoots in front of it without making any *conscious* calculation at all as to the rate the rabbit is going at, &c. He does not say to himself, "I must shoot well in front of this rabbit ; he is going very hard." He, if in form, does so without consciously planning it. This at any rate is my idea of how the thing is done.

From the very beginning cultivate the habit of shooting ahead of your game : I believe there is scarcely a more important habit to acquire in shooting. On some days one shoots most of the rabbits in the head, or at any rate in the front parts ; on other days there is that ghastly breaking of hind legs, especially in the case of broadside shots. On yet other days the rabbit so often does not stop at all—because he is not hit. I believe that when the rabbit thus goes on, one has generally been over or behind him if he has offered a broadside shot ; and behind if he has been moving

more or less straight away from the shooter. But I suspect it is generally a case of behind. The curious thing is that, when for a while I am killing a fast rabbit dead every other shot on an average, I am not particularly conscious of shooting well in front. Eye and arm, being on excellent terms, seem to do the work without the active intervention of the will. Still, I advise that you should constantly bear in mind the necessity of shooting in front, of being well up to the moving object ; it will then tend more and more to become an unconscious habit. I should say but few gunners are often too much ahead of fast-moving game.

What has been said about the necessity of shooting ahead of the object aimed at applies to all game, furred and feathered alike, offering broadside shots, as well as to rabbits going away from the shooter. How far ahead you must fire you can learn only by experience ; there is no other way. I have not shot driven grouse. I have shot a certain number of partridges and pheasants going at about the top of their speed, and many, many rabbits moving as fast as they possibly can, and what has struck me has been that the successful and clean shots have not been aimed quite so far ahead as might be supposed, but still distinctly ahead. As to pheasants, partridges, woodcocks, and other birds going away from the shooter, here, I believe, though I cannot be perfectly sure, that when I miss I have been beneath my bird. Be, if anything, a little *above* the bird that is going

away from you ; be a trifle *beyond* the rabbit that is going away from you. How easy it is sagely to set down these injunctions, and how hard often it is for him who sets them down himself to carry them out !

As we have seen, you do not in shooting at running or flying game aim as you do at stationary objects. The sight is not used : I don't see how the sighting-plate between the barrels can be used either ; at any rate, I am not conscious of having used it. Now, in trying an unloaded gun, and in aiming with it at small birds flying—without meaning to shoot—one has often seen people following up the moving object and trying to get the sight on it. This is what you must not do in real shooting. You must on no account follow objects up with the gun. It is a sure sign of a bungler, and of a man, moreover, who should be given a wide berth in field or covert. Do not get the gun up till the moment has come to fire. Then raise the gun rapidly and easily to the shoulder, swing it in the direction required, and fire even as you swing. It is, as it were, all part of one movement. I am not at all sure that there is not an essential similarity in this respect between the correct way of using a sporting gun and a golf driver or brassey. If the swing of the gun, by the way, were arrested before the shot was fired, it would surely be more difficult, in case of a miss with the first barrel, to succeed with the second.

I have said quite enough about this matter, and will but add that, since writing all but the last

paragraph or two, I have read what Mr. Sydney Buxton says in his charming book,¹ and have spoken of the matter to one whom I have shot with for many years, and who is a good performer. Mr. Buxton's notion of how it is done is not unlike mine. What has here been said of the sub-conscious goes not ill, I think, with Mr. Buxton's remark that there is not "much conscious aiming, or consciousness of the existence of the gun as such. There is much truth in the remark, 'If I aim, I poke; if I poke, I miss; the days I shoot best are the days on which I don't know what I am doing.'" Now for my other friend. I asked him: "Can you tell me what you do when you shoot a fast rabbit. Do you aim at it?" "No," he replied. Then I asked him if he could say what he did. But all he could say was that he put the gun to his shoulder, and, if in good form, got his rabbit! "It's a matter of eye, you know," he added, and beyond this I could get no enlightenment from him.

A few remarks about the sort of gun that is now commonly provided for young beginners and the shooter's outfit may be convenient here, before we turn out for a day's sport in the covert, farm land, or common.

Muzzle-loaders for beginners are now, I take it, practically unknown; a few years from now indeed they will be obsolete, seeing that excellent and—contrary to what some people believe—perfectly

¹ "Fishing and Shooting," by Sydney Buxton, M.P. (Murray, 1902).

safe breech-loaders can be bought for a few sovereigns.¹ Personally, I have never shot with any gun but a 12-bore—unless the gardener's boy's muzzle-loader mentioned in "Beginning to Shoot" had a smaller bore: I am not sure about this—but I did not begin till I was about sixteen, and did not shoot regularly in cover till I was eighteen. Most boys of thirteen or fourteen, I am told, now begin with a single-barrelled breech-loader of either 20 or 16 bore. The age at which beginners can comfortably handle a double-barrelled gun depends of course on their strength: some can use one at fourteen.

Here are some weights of the single and the double barrelled guns sold at the Army and Navy Stores Gun Department:—

Single—20-bore weighs about $4\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.

16-bore	"	"	5	"
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12-bore	"	"	$5\frac{1}{4}$	"
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Double—16-bore "

16-bore	"	"	6	"
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20-bore	"	from	$5\frac{1}{4}$	to	$5\frac{1}{2}$	lbs.
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As regards prices, single-barrelled guns (with hammer) begin at £4, 18s. A single-barrelled hammerless gun, 12-bore or smaller, will cost about £12. A gun such as the latter is likely no doubt to prove serviceable much longer than one of the smaller bored guns with a hammer, for it

¹ A keeper's double-barrel gun, with rebounding hammers, central fire, 12-bore—a good, sound weapon I believe—can be bought for under six pounds.

may be kept and occasionally used after a double gun has been adopted. There are other guns, single and double, suitable for beginners, of various prices intermediate between the £4, 18s. and the £12 gun: one, for instance (hammerless double), at £8, 8s.; another at £10, 10s. I am inclined to think that a 12-bore is the most serviceable of these guns to start with, but am not at all inclined to lay down the law in the matter. With the smaller bores you will have to be more accurate in your aim than with the 12-bore gun: I do not describe this as a disadvantage though.

After shooting is over for the day, you should take your gun to pieces—I mean separate the stock from the barrels, and clean it yourself. Tow is the best material to pass through the barrels. After you have done this two or three times you may pass through the barrels the cleaning-brush, which is attached to a rod or else to a string. Those parts of the gun about the locks should be oiled a little now and then, and always after a wet day's shooting. And they should be kept clean and bright. For my part I find the cleaning of my gun after a day's shooting by no means a nuisance; it is a light and not at all an unpleasant labour. It is better to take the gun to pieces after the day's shooting and keep it in the case. A cartridge-bag and a cartridge-extractor are indispensable. The former will cost a little under half-a-guinea—I do not recommend cheap bags, as the wet soon destroys them—the latter a shilling or so. An

extractor, which is one of the trifles of the shooting outfit in regard to price, and which must not be left at home, is very useful when the cartridges stick, as the best of them will at times. I have seen people actually use their teeth for tugging out obstinate cartridges when they have neither extractor nor any other implement that will serve at a pinch, but I do not recommend the practice; the cartridge may loosen the tooth instead of the tooth the cartridge. When I first began shooting with a breech-loader I filled my own cartridges. Many an hour of my life in those days I spent pouring powder and shot and ramming greasy wads into green, blue, aye and even brown cartridge-cases which had already been used more than once. As a consequence those cartridges would stick rather often: the vexation when one of them stuck very fast, and I had forgotten to bring out my extractor!

Nowadays, I fancy, not many gunners fill their own cartridges, unless they are rather "faddy" about the exact sorts and proportions of powder and shot they shoot with. In the days I speak of, by the way, the powder used was chiefly the old black sort. It made our guns very dirty, and it caused a great deal of smoke—on some days especially; but I believe it was as killing as most powders. I have no particular preference or fancy as to what "smokeless powders" I use. Sometimes I shoot with amberite, sometimes with Schultz. It is not so much the particular powder

used or the size of the shot—numbers 5 and 6 shot are best on the whole perhaps for such shooting as these chapters deal with—that does it ; rather it is the man behind the powder. It is well perhaps to begin with rather lightly loaded cartridges, and to change to ordinary ones when the recoil is no longer a matter worth considering. When you begin, recoil sometimes *is* a matter to be considered. I remember that the day following my first rook shoot at Enham Park—it was on that delightful day I first shot flying—my right shoulder was black and blue. The firmer you hold the gun to the shoulder, the less will the recoil trouble you.

You do not want advice as to the clothes suitable to the sport. I could not give it to you if you did, for these sartorial questions have never interested me much. I always shot and fished in any clothes I happened to have that were not too new and good for the thorns and the rain and the wear and tear. Gaiters or leggings we used to buy as a rule in the village shop, where we also got our ammunition and our boot-laces, our gun licenses—for it was a post-office as well as a shop of all wares—shooting and fishing coats, caps, and waterproofs : of these I scarcely had my fair share. Probably it did not much hurt me to go shooting without them, though you should by all means take such gifts if they are offered to you. I do regret that I did not set more store by waterproof boots in those days. It is only quite recently I have studied this matter

seriously. There comes a time when a twinge or two of undoubted "rheumatics"—as my friends the keeper and the woodman call it—reminds one that it is time to leave off walking about for hours with wet feet. It is really a good plan to have a pair of brown or black absolutely waterproof boots. Do not on any account let the servants put blacking on these boots ; they will if you are not careful, for they have a notion that boots were made to shine. Keep your shooting-boots (which when wet outside must not be put too near the fire) well greased, not oiled, and see to it yourself.



SINGLE-HANDED : AMONGST : THE : RABBITS .

CHAPTER II

RABBITS, PARTRIDGES, AND PIGEONS

COVERT shooting, where beaters only are used for moving the game and driving it to the guns, will be treated of by Mr. Portman. Here we will deal with the covert shooting where dogs are used, and the game consists chiefly of rabbits. This sport may be divided into two branches—shooting the coppices, the underwood of which is from one year's growth to, say, four or five years, and also the high wood ; shooting the commons and thickets.

It is no use beginning covert shooting till the leaf is off ; that is, sometime in November. In spots in the woods where the bracken fern grows thick, late December or even January is a better time than November, because the brown masses of dead fern are not well beaten to the ground till there has been hard frost or snow, and it is difficult to shoot rabbits or hares among this undergrowth. Often you have to shoot at the spot where the fern is moving, for the rabbit or hare is hidden in its flight ; and in shooting thus you have to be extremely careful not to hurt the dogs.

Large parties are not very good for beginners. The pleasantest way of learning to shoot in covert is to start out with one fellow-gunner and the gamekeeper, and perhaps another to help carry the game. Often, whilst out alone in the covert, I used to wish much that I had somebody to help me carry the game, or else a velveteen coat full of great pockets like the gamekeeper's. It is astonishing how much game one gamekeeper or gamekeeper's assistant can carry at a pinch. I know a gamekeeper who has carried as many as thirty-two rabbits in his pockets and "harled"¹ on a stick across his shoulder, but in that case a number of the rabbits were paunched on the spot. If you are likely to shoot much alone, a coat with ample

¹ A "harled" rabbit has a slit with a sharp knife cut in one thigh, and through this the other leg is thrust. By this device you can thread half-a-dozen rabbits on a stick, and carry them in one hand or across the shoulder with comparative comfort.

storage room is a boon. It is possible you may be tempted to hide your rabbits when these become irksome by their weight, but you will scarcely care to put your pheasant in a bush till you come back that way later, and nothing would induce you to treat a woodcock so.

However, at the moment I am picturing you as out in the covert, with one shooting companion and the gamekeeper. The method when shooting rabbits with dogs is for the guns to take in strips the covert chosen for the day. The keeper will walk between the two guns at a distance from either of, say, sixty yards. But the extent of covert covered by the guns and the keeper will vary according to the height and thickness of the underwood and undergrowth, the amount of ground at the disposal of the party, and the abundance or scarcity of game. If there is plenty of covert and little game, and the underwood is low, so that the members of the party can see one another at some distance off, then the plan will naturally be to take broad "drifts," to cover much ground at a time. If there is not much covert to shoot through and game is abundant, naturally the tendency will be to take far narrower "drifts." A certain number of rabbits, with a few hares, in the course of the day will be dislodged from their forms¹ by the shooters

¹ The "form" is the smooth place, commonly slightly hollowed out, where the rabbit or hare squats, resting through the day. Hares choose nearly always an open spot to squat in, or at most avail themselves of a bunch of grass. Rabbits in high wood, where there is little or no

themselves, who disturb them by walking through the undergrowth. The keeper, who beats the bushes and likely lurking-places which he passes and cheers on the dogs, dislodges others. But most of the ground game is found and put up by the dogs. Well-trained rabbiting dogs, spaniels and terriers—not by any means necessarily pure-bred specimens—are greatly to be desired for this style of covert shooting. You want the dogs to hustle the rabbits about, giving plenty of tongue all the while, and to chase them—up to a point.¹ You want them to work the ground steadily, visiting all the bramble beds and thickets of grass, fern, &c. It is a constant pleasure to watch a dog work, which is at once keen-nosed and well-trained, prying into all the likely spots, and following by scent, giving tongue when that scent is hot, and even contriving—I believe that the best-trained dogs do this systematically at times—to work the game round to their masters.

When the keeper sees a rabbit travelling more or less across the line he calls out to the gun on his right or on his left, as the case may be, who stops and hopes for a shot. The guns stop too, and are on the alert for shots when the dogs about them

undergrowth, will squat on the open ground or among the stems of hazel and oak, making their form on the dead leaves; but they prefer fern, brambles, and thick grass to lie in.

¹ The keen but ill-trained dog will, in hot pursuit of a rabbit or hare that goes clean away, disappear for ten minutes or so quite often, paying no heed to whistle or to the shouts of his master, till he has fairly lost scent of the rabbit or hare.

are giving tongue. It is a good plan to wait a little at open glades now and then, whilst the dogs are bustling about in the undergrowth near by. Often rabbits will come stealing across these open spaces, stopping for a few seconds here and there, listening to the dogs, and uncertain where they can most safely betake themselves to. It is never so satisfactory shooting these irresolute rabbits in covert--creeping rabbits or creepers as we sometimes call them—but in this method of covert shooting with dogs it is necessary sometimes to do so.

The open spaces are good spots at which to stand and get shots at the rabbits running fast away from the dogs. Stand quite still and presently you will get a clinking broadside shot at a rabbit going perhaps as fast as he does in the open when well on his feet. It is good, clean work when you lay the rabbit dead thus, and the three or four dogs, wildly giving tongue as they rushed after him, suddenly become silent, and go off to put up another. One such rabbit is certainly worth half-a-dozen creepers.

Sometimes the strip of covert to be taken runs parallel with either a fairly broad or narrow woodland ride, and one gun walks along this ride whilst the keeper and the other gun walk through the underwood. If you are in the ride, you take the rabbits which cross it within forty yards distance. You will not be troubled much by creepers then perhaps. Walk along, not in the middle of the ride,

but at the edge of the covert in which the keeper and the other gun are walking. You will fire at the rabbits which cross just as they are disappearing into the covert on the other side of the ride. In the case of very narrow paths through the covert, the shooting is undoubtedly extremely difficult. Even when, by the yelping of the dogs or the warning of the keeper, you know that a rabbit is coming towards you and is going to cross the ride, it is extremely difficult shooting, if, through the thickness of undergrowth, there is no chance to speak of that you may get a shot at him after he has crossed and is in the covert on the other side. He is across the narrow path of three or four feet in a flash, and you do not see him till he flies that path ! How is it to be done ? Well, sometimes you may undoubtedly get him by shooting at the spot in the covert on the other side of the ride where your brain telegraphs to your eye and hand that he is. I have had rabbits like this—but, ah, the many I have not had ! Often I have seen the very quickest gun beat by rabbit after rabbit crossing the narrow paths. I have seen a quick movement on the part of the shooter, but the gun has not been fairly swung on to the rabbit and never fired at all.

I have seen shooters standing in one of these paths, or in broader paths, with the gun actually pressed to the shoulder : they have been waiting for the rabbit to cross : and, I admit, I have stood thus in preparation myself now and then. I have got a few rabbits in this way, but I have felt all the while

that it was not wise. It looks so bad; it is not workmanlike; it is an over anxious device. Keep the gun down till the moment to raise, swing, and fire arrives, or you will be sure to fumble.

In shooting at rabbits in these very narrow paths, be sure, before you fire, that a dog is not in hot pursuit a foot or two behind the rabbit.

Pheasants, woodcocks, and hares live in the coverts with the rabbits, and add zest to the sport of rabbit-shooting. You will not get shots often at high-flying or very fast pheasants, unless the ground is very broken and you are walking now in deep wooded dells, now along or over steep hill and hanger. But you will find that some wild pheasants in covert, getting up in front of the dogs, offer by no means the simplest of shots at thirty-five or forty yards distance. When pheasants get up within short range, fifteen or twenty yards, there is a tendency on the part of some rabbit-shooters to be too quick on them. It is droll to see apparently the easiest shots imaginable at flying game missed now and then by even good performers. Sometimes the explanation is, I think, that the pheasant is shot at whilst it is still mounting and before it sails away. A certain cock pheasant which my dog put up in an open field I cannot forget. It happened more than eighteen years ago on a farm over which I was shooting by myself for several months. This farm held a fair head of partridges with some hares, whilst in the two or three small coverts and in the dense hedgerows there were

a good many rabbits, some pheasants, and occasionally a woodcock. I remember missing a very fast quail which rose in some rough standing barley, and a twisting jack-snipe which was also in standing corn ; and I recollect dropping a partridge dead at just eighty yards distance—the longest shot I have ever made or am ever likely to make.

But this cock pheasant was a cruel humiliation, though there was no one near to witness it. He rose at about twenty yards distance out of a rough spot, and I had two barrels without touching a feather. Perhaps, if I had shut both eyes, I should have got him with the first barrel. He was a perfect haystack of a shot.

On another occasion, at home in the woods, my spaniels put up a woodcock which flew straight away slowly. Two barrels this time again, and nothing happened. My only comfort is that much better men than I am, now and then cannot touch these absurdly easy shots. It *is* comforting to know that the swells themselves fail sometimes ; that they miss their two-feet putts on the green, that they try the simplest “Whitechapel shot” on the billiard-table and ignominiously fail, that they fire two barrels at an old hedgerow cock pheasant, and that he sails joyfully away from them. Then there is a brotherly feeling between us and the swell performer : it is the touch of Nature that makes the whole world kin.

Give, then, the pheasant, put up by the dogs in covert, time ; or, to put it in another way, give

yourself time. As for woodcocks, it is excusable if you shoot at them even a somewhat desperately long shot, should they rise wild. You will not often get a woodcock which is more than forty-five yards off, I think; but it is an easy bird to stop if you can manage to strike it. A very few shots kill a woodcock. In regard to winged woodcocks, I cannot say whether they will run or not. I have never known of a case, but keepers and others have told me they will run now and then when winged, a little way at any rate. Winged cock pheasants are rare sprinters; hens, on the whole, I think, less so. As to hares—may you kill yours outright. The cry of a wounded hare is not good to hear. Do not try long shots at hares; especially desist if they are travelling away from you. Whilst in the coverts you may from time to time meet with barn as well as tawny owls, which rest by day in the ivied oaks, &c. Leave them alone; they are not for the sportsman's gun: neither are kestrels. At the carrion crow, another bird of the coverts, you will not, I fancy, often get a chance. The keeper has certain devices—which I cannot bring myself in the least to like—for keeping down the crows. We have only one this winter; all his companions are dead: he, grown cunning even beyond his kind, lingers on. He has nothing to fear so far as I am concerned.

This method of walking the low underwoods and shooting with dogs resembles in the main partridge-shooting where the birds are not driven; except

that in walking up partridges, as I am accustomed to this sport, dogs are not used : only a retriever is taken to secure wounded birds or hares. Not having a regular retriever, when shooting quite alone over the farms, the sporting rights of which we rented or reserved, I used generally to take with me a couple of spaniels ; but this was because there were some spinneys and very thick hedgerows, out of which one counted on getting a few rabbits. The dogs I kept in at heel whilst walking through the root crops, &c. : an obedient dog alone can be tolerated when you are partridge-shooting ; an ill-trained dog is far worse on the farm lands than in covert.

A party of three will work a field of turnips, clover, &c., just as they work the covert. When the three have walked to within a short distance of the end of the strip of covert or the field of turnips, &c., they are taking, one gun stands still whilst the other gun and the keeper or beater swing round to come into line again, and take a fresh strip back, or to the right or left, as may be arranged.

Partridge-shooting is, I suppose, held by most gunners to be a better sport than rabbit-shooting. I should find it hard to declare a decided preference for one or the other. Both are delightful. In rabbiting in the coverts and commons, there is always the chance of a shot or two now and then at pheasants, hares, above all at a woodcock : that cry in covert of “Mark cock !” when a woodcock

is flushed, makes you tremendously keen. Then the quick snapshots at rabbits going hard in thick spots are great sport, especially when they "come off."

On the other hand the right and left, which we so constantly get at walked-up partridges, is an experience comparatively rare in rabbiting in covert. The thing is to go in for both, and never to trouble about which is the better sport of the two. In rabbiting in covert, absolute silence on the part of the guns is not by any means always desirable where the wood is high and thick, and the members of the party cannot well keep in touch with each other except through the voice; this matter has been touched upon in the warnings contained in the first chapter of "Guns."

But absolute silence is desirable in partridge-shooting. The sound of voices will make the partridges rise wild from their lay, and out of range. Keep quiet, then, whilst you are walking up partridges.

When a covey rises within range, never fire into the thick or "the brown" of the birds. Choose a particular bird outside "the brown," and, if you bring him down with your first barrel, choose another outside for your second, should the covey by then still be within range—forty-five yards or so. If your bird or birds fall, on no account must you rush forward to pick them up. Steady yourself, and reload at once; there well may be some isolated birds crouching near by in the turnips or

whatever the lay may be, and these, by rushing forward, you will put up, and so lose the chance of getting. Complete coolness and command over yourself are essential to excellence in shooting. When a covey rises within range, and all the shots that are practicable have been fired at the birds which comprise it, or when a covey rises out of gunshot, you stand still and mark carefully where it goes to. "Mark! Mark!" is the imperative of the moment—the only talking which is permissible out partridge-shooting.

Partridges marked down are sometimes pursued at once, sometimes left till the field they rose from is well shot over. When presently you come near the spot where the birds were seen to alight, be ready for a shot or shots at any moment, but do not get your gun up till the birds are up and the time has come to cover them and fire. It looks ugly, just as it does in covert shooting, to see a man holding his gun to his shoulder before the game is up. The swing is the thing here as in snap-shooting at rabbits.

The prettiest sport of the day is when a covey of partridges scatters in a field of clover or roots, and the isolated birds are picked up one by one as they rise. Some people, when the birds are wild and rising out of range, will fire a long shot at them on the chance of scattering the covey; but this, in my experience, is not often a success. When you are walking up very wild and wary partridges, you must avail yourself of every scrap of cover in the way

of hedges and trees, and must study what is the best chance of getting within range of the birds. As a rule, you will prefer to walk with the wind in your face rather than at your back, as the latter of course would serve to carry the sound of your footsteps to the birds.

It is good sport when a covey, or a portion of a covey, scatters in a hedgerow and lies close there ; but this is not a very common occurrence. Often the covey seems to go into a hedge, when in reality the birds have stopped just short of it, and will rise wild when you approach the spot.

Do not suppose that the birds which you have marked down will, when you draw near, necessarily rise from the particular spot you have your eye upon. Very often the birds upon alighting will run for many yards before stopping and crouching.

In partridge-shooting, as in all other methods of shooting, a gun should take only his own birds. You must not shoot across at birds which have risen nearer to your companion or companions than to yourself. From time to time no doubt there must occur cases where it is impossible at the moment to say to whom a bird or a rabbit or hare belongs ; and game in this neutral zone of fire may be shot at by two guns, but as a rule it is quite simple to distinguish clearly between *meum* and *tuum* out shooting.

We will now turn back to the woods and the commons, as I have something to say about three

distinct and capital branches of sport among wood-pigeons and rabbits.

Pigeon-shooting from November till February is very good fun. To enjoy it to any extent you must have the right to enter and shoot in woods large or small. Large woods are far better for this pursuit, as they contain a bigger head of birds, and when acorns are abundant, as was the case in 1900—in 1901 and 1902 the acorn crop failed, and the birds were for the most part in the fields till the roosting hour—they contain great flocks and small parties of birds during the day as well as the night. But in small woods, too, there are usually some pigeons to be shot by the careful stalker.

To get shots at pigeons in the daytime, it is better to be alone, and you need no dog. The plan is to walk along the woodland paths, ready at any moment to get the gun up at a bird as it dashes out of a tree within a distance of from fifteen to thirty or thirty-five yards, or rises from the ground where it has been feeding on acorns, &c. As a rule the pigeon will be going straight away from you through the trees; broadside shots at pigeons, unless you are hidden and lying in wait for them, are less usual.

Fairly on the wing, the wood-pigeon flies strongly and fast, and, unless one of its wings is disabled, it is by no means always stopped when struck at a distance of forty or forty-five yards; the skin is thick, the plumage is thick and firm, and the bird

itself is able sometimes to carry off shot to a surprising extent.

These shots at pigeons from the woodland paths are generally snapshots ; if you wait, the bird is the other side of a tree and out of danger. I should call it hard snap-shooting. But there is this in the gunner's favour : the pigeon makes a good deal of noise in starting from its tree or from the ground ; it does not steal away as some woodland birds will. It is rather a blunderer at first, and this favours the gunner. The worst of these snapshots at pigeons among the trees is that one is apt to wing birds : they never run when winged, and by reason of their colour, which does not assimilate with the ground, are easily found in the thickest coverts ; but one wants mercifully to kill one's game outright. A broadside shot at a pigeon is more likely to kill outright, and still more so is the shot at a wood-pigeon coming straight towards and over the gun.

Pigeons with crops full of acorns or green food from the fields, or later on ivy berries, are more easily approached, being comparatively sluggish ; but it is not so satisfactory to get them thus, at a disadvantage.

Towards night, or on a December day as early as about four in the afternoon, the pigeons begin to settle on their sleeping quarters, which they shift according to where the wind sits. If there is a path under spruces or larches or dark pines, where you shoot, you may often get a shot a little

before dusk by walking underneath those trees. A pigeon that dashes off from the topmost boughs of a towering fir is hard to hit : I should say that the gunner who can bring down stone dead two out of three such pigeons, may take rank as a fine performer.

Another and a favourite way of shooting wood-pigeons is to crouch against a tree, round about and on which, there is reason to believe, the birds roost in numbers. You wait perfectly still for the pigeons to come in, getting, it may be, a shot presently at several clustered on a branch they have alit upon. This is potting your pigeon. It is of course not half so good as getting him on the wing, though there was a time presumably when they made a point of potting their pigeons. In a book full of quaint maxims, called "Some Fruits of Solitude," written by William Penn, and printed first in 1693, we are told that "To Shoot well *Flying* is well ; but to *Chose* it, has more of *Vanity* than *Judgment*." In those times firing a gun was a matter to be dwelt upon much more than it is to-day. It took time to load ; it was comparatively quite a weighty business. Now you just open the gun at the breech, fling away the empty cartridge-case—or let the extractor do it for you—slip in a fresh one, snap the gun together, and you are ready for the next. No wonder we go in for shots which, in the cautious Quaker's view, argued vanity rather than good judgment. And then, it may be, they really wanted the things to cook and

eat more than we ordinarily do to-day. You will note that in Walton's "Compleat Angler" there is a good deal about how to cook and serve up the fishes as well as about how to catch them.

At any rate you may quite safely begin by shooting wood-pigeons not flying, just as you will begin by shooting rabbits not running, though you must not pot pheasants or partridges. I have more than once, when I have wanted a pigeon, and have not seen how to get him in any other way, tried a pot shot. And, take my word for it, you will not get every pigeon you shoot at in a tree with thick branches, if he is forty or more yards off.

Besides the ring-dove or wood-pigeon, there is the stock-dove, which I have heard described by some country folk as the "blue rock": he now and then joins the pigeon parties in hard weather. This is a considerably smaller bird than the ring-dove, and has not the beautiful white feathers on the side of the neck, but metallic green ones instead. Both birds are richly clad with iridescent feathers. Even in winter, when the ring-dove is not at its brightest, it is a beautiful bird, gleaming and shimmering in colour. When the winter passes, and the ring-doves break up their flocks and parties and pair off, you must desist from the gun so far as they are concerned. They lose then their winter wildness, and are therefore no longer creatures keenly to be stalked by the sportsman. Stay your hand when the ring-dove pairs, and wait till the coming of the autumn.

Ferreting is a favourite method of rabbit-shooting. Its chief drawback is that the ferret, instead of making the rabbit bolt, may kill it in the burrow, and "lie up" there for an hour or more. This probably occurs less often when one is shooting ferreted rabbits than when one is netting the holes. Moving about and setting the nets will cause a certain amount of sound, especially where the ground is honeycombed, and it is strange how averse from bolting rabbits are when they scent some vague danger without. They will sometimes push their heads against the end of a blind tunnel, and suffer the ferret to scrape them horribly; or they will perish in one of the main passages; anything rather than face the unknown foe above. However, on some days and from some burrows¹—the reasons for bolting and non-bolting days and burrows are obscure—rabbits bolt briskly. Though they seem so fearful of man's footfall and of the nets, and will run back often if they catch sight of the ferreter, the sound of the gun fired at one bolting rabbit does not necessarily prevent other rabbits in the burrow from coming out when hustled about by the ferret. And when the rabbits are bolting freely on a still day in the woods or hedgerows and hedgerow banks, the sport is lively. In ferreting burrows in covert, it is best when there

¹ The gamekeeper and the woodmen in the South of England speak of a rabbit's "burry," or "bury," and of a fox's "earth." A rabbit's "stop" is a single tunnel containing a doe rabbit's nest and young. When the mother goes out, she stops up this hole with earth.

is one gunner and one ferreter. The gunner, unless he is a cool and very experienced hand, should always stand close to the ferreter. This is the safe plan, and any plan that is not perfectly safe is utterly to be condemned. Several gunners and several ferreters or onlookers hanging about a burrow form a party which you will do well to shun, whether you carry a gun or not. The rabbit often comes out at the hole where you do not expect him, and he does not always, in his confusion at finding a company waiting for him above ground, make straight off from the mouth of the burrow. He may dodge about, and it may be hard to say which gun he belongs to. When there is only one gunner, and he stands a little in front of or close beside the ferreter (who, after taking the ferret out of the bag, and putting it into one of the holes, should step gently back and *crouch* behind or beside the gunner¹), it is all plain sailing. The gunner then has a perfectly free hand.

Sometimes the rabbit, when he is just out, stops a second or two before running off. If the gunner is within ten yards or so of the hole, he will be glad to give the rabbit a few more yards' grace, for, though we want to shoot our rabbits dead, we do not want to spoil them for the table. There was a favourite story told of an old duffer with the gun —though in other ways a good fellow—in our

¹ The gunner had much better not put his gun at full-cock until this has been done; and in going from burrow to burrow he should put his gun at the half-cock or "safety," or, still better, take the cartridges out.

district, that he would now and then get a rabbit as it squatted in its form, crying out loudly after this deed, for the benefit of his neighbours, “Eighty yards ! eighty yards ! Going like a bullet, and I cut ‘un over pretty.’” His rabbits were extremely limp as a rule, and no wonder, considering the short range at which he fired down on them.

So we must not take the rabbit too soon in ferreting in the covert ; but we must not wait too long, otherwise the stems of underwood and the under-growth will shelter him effectually.

Both gunners and ferreters must keep back from the mouths of the holes, lest the rabbit, catching sight of them, return precipitately, and be killed by the ferret underground.

The best days for covert ferreting, in my opinion, are fine and still, or fairly still. On a wet day there may be more rabbits lying underground, but it is not so pleasant waiting for them in the dripping woods ; on a roaring day one cannot hear the rabbits, and it is more difficult to dig down upon them in case the ferret kills them in the burrow.

Rules to bear in mind in ferreting in covert are :—Do not have your gun to your shoulder and pointed towards the hole out of which you expect the rabbit to come ; take care that your companion is close behind or crouching close at your side ; keep perfect silence ; do not put your gun at full-cock till the ferret is in, and your companion has crept up behind or beside you ; do not take a snapshot at the rabbit directly he appears outside

the hole ; after shooting, or shooting at, one rabbit that has bolted, keep quiet and wait till you are sure there are not others below being hunted by the ferret ; when it becomes clear that the ferret has lain up with a rabbit and must be dug out, put your gun at the half-cock forthwith, or, better, take the cartridges out.

But the kind of rabbiting which you enjoy perhaps most of all when you are in form, and perhaps least of all when you are "clean off," is shooting the small isolated patches and single bushes of furze on commons and wild places. We are still dealing, remember, with the method of shooting rabbits that are for the most part put up and hustled about by dogs, rather than beaters, though a beater or two will always help to keep the sport lively by encouraging the dogs and aiding them in very thick spots. Rabbits very often travel quickly in the open, quicker than a hare when first roused ; as we have seen, too, they can run hard enough to please most gunners even in thick covert, when a yelping pack of terriers and spaniels are in hot pursuit, chasing them by sight. But it is my notion that the quickest rabbits of all are those dislodged by half-frantic dogs and beaters (who thoroughly enter into the spirit of the thing) from these small "bunches," as the country folk often call the isolated bushes of furze, &c.

Dogs, even in the early part of the day, whilst still fresh and keen as mustard on rabbit after

rabbit, do not like the prickles of the furze, which are scarcely less formidable than the quills of the hedgehog. So they commonly make much to-do before actually getting into one of these bushes. They make a point of not going in at all before they have satisfied themselves that a rabbit is there. A trustworthy terrier or spaniel will, with rare exceptions, be able to tell you without going in whether a rabbit is lying in one of these bushes. It will run round and sniff, now on the ground, now in the air. If a rabbit is in the bush, the dog gives tongue, unless it is one of the absolutely silent hunting order, and even then its behaviour will usually give you a pretty good notion of whether you are to have a shot or not. Dogs, well or moderately well trained, are very partial to this branch of rabbitting. After a little practice they seem quite to know what is expected from them when the shooter turns towards these bushes. Running forward, they work round bush after bush till one is reached that clearly holds a rabbit. Rabbits have a way of lying very close indeed in these bushes. I have noticed that rabbits in the larger but thinner coverts, after they have been repeatedly hustled about, two or three times in the same week, in the same places, often start up from their forms well in front of the dogs which are giving tongue, and steal right away. But, in the places where I have shot, the rabbit which is lying in the isolated furze-bush is far less inclined to stir when he hears dogs, beaters, and guns who are

a little distance away. He sticks to his fortress. So it happens that the shooter has time to take his stand deliberately before the rabbit bolts out.

If there are two guns shooting these bushes—more than two is not in my view at all desirable—they should take up their positions, of course, on different sides. If you are by yourself you will be able to cover a great deal of ground, and will have a chance of getting a fair shot at whatever spot the rabbit comes out. If the gamekeeper is with you, he beats the bush and cheers on the dogs, as a rule, from the opposite side to yours, hoping to make the rabbit bolt towards the gun.

But you often cannot be at all sure where the rabbit will come out, or in what direction he will go when out. The one thing sure is that he will travel at a great pace. Sometimes he comes out to bolt off almost between your legs; sometimes he comes out by the keeper, and takes such a line of flight that you must not put up your gun for fear of "an accident." The dogs being so near, it often happens that you dare not shoot for fear of touching one of them. Occasionally a rabbit going full pelt with the dogs at his heels, so that you cannot fire, will turn off at quite a sharp angle, and then it is just possible that you may be able to take him at the right moment without risking the lives of the dogs; but such shots are not good for beginners. Any fumbling over them may prove disastrous, for the dogs are very near, though not absolutely in

the line of fire. Rabbits dislodged from these bushes clearly recognise their perilous situation, and, as the keeper says, they are "mighty quick." If you are not in good form, this sort of rabbit-shooting "finds you out" as soon as any I know.

It is pretty sport. On a certain wild, beautiful green spot, several hundred acres in extent, and largely sprinkled over with bushes such as these, I generally have an hour or so of this kind of shooting on several days each winter. Sometimes I work these bushes alone, with the aid of a dog or two, sometimes with the gamekeeper and with another gun; and I always regard it as the cream of that particular day's sport among the rabbits, if any are found in the bushes. From long experience we all come to gauge fairly well the likelihood of this or that bush holding a rabbit to-day, even before the dogs reach it. And in these several bushes — close to the denser covert — in the case of which one knows exactly where to stand, the rabbits, however much hustled, always retaining enough presence of mind to make for a thick row of blackthorn, &c., close at hand. One may take these rabbits at any distance between, say, fifteen and forty-five yards. Now and then a second barrel is fired at a rabbit distant fifty yards or a little more than that, but not often with effect. During the past season I brought off a long broad-side shot with my first barrel at a rabbit in the open among these bushes; the distance was not paced

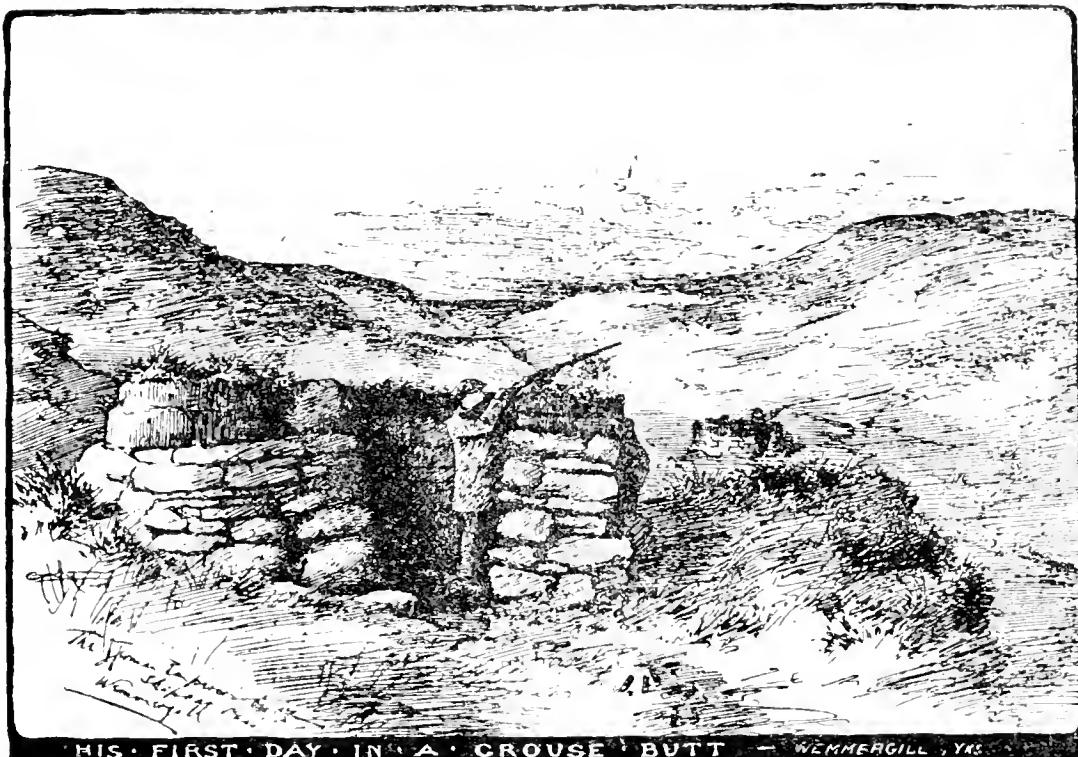
out after the shot, but it could not have been short of a full sixty yards. It was the longest shot I had brought off for many years, but not altogether a satisfactory one. Perhaps the only long shots at rabbits or hares which are really satisfactory, are those very occasional ones when the animal is hit in the head, and, despite the distance, killed outright.

This reminds me that it is necessary for the gunner to know how to put wounded creatures instantly out of their pain. Do not hold the rabbit or hare by the back legs and strike a sharp blow downwards on to the back of the head or neck. Many men with hard right hand can and do kill rabbits and hares in this way by one quick blow ; but a less strong and practised hand will bungle. Instead, hold the rabbit or hare by the back legs, quickly take the back of the head well above the neck with your hand, and a slight pull downwards instantly kills the animal : see that your grasp is well above the neck, or your purpose of ending the pain of the animal swiftly will not be effected. Wounded birds should be dealt with in the same way. It is not a pleasant subject to be touched upon, is it ? But it must not be shirked. The wounding of bird and beast of chase, which, even with the straightest shooters in the world, must happen, is an incident in shooting which is distasteful, to say the least, to good sportsmen. And there are days when you are a good deal wrung by the pity of the thing. This is not the place to treat at length of the ethics

of field sports—shooting, hunting, and angling.¹ But I must say that I am unconvinced that the keen sportsman is necessarily a less humane man than those who decry our field sports chiefly on the ground that we have no right to inflict pain on living things. I believe it is a narrow and mistaken view to take, that field sports brutalise a man. The sporting squire of “Locksley Hall” was, to his rival, as a dog which “hunts in dreams”; one who would hold his wife as “something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.” In reality, as we know from the recantation in “Locksley Hall Sixty Years After,” he was the “sound and honest rustic Squire.” There are various grounds on which the three great English field sports can be defended, if ever there should be a real need for defence. One of the strongest of these, to my thinking, is that, by these fine exercises on horse-back and afoot, we are storing health and hardness against the stealing years. It is a bounden duty that we keep supple in limb so long as possible in life, and never suffer the physical part of us to rust. Field sports are about the best means to that end. But to excel in these pursuits, to be racy of the chase, we should begin early in life. One hears of men who do not take to shooting till they have reached middle age, and who, notwithstanding,

¹ Angling was called by Wordsworth the “blameless sport.” Greatly, however, as I care for and believe in angling, I never could bring myself to think that the question of pain or suffering inflicted does not come in here at all.

get a complete mastery over the gun ; though less often than one does of men who begin golf late in life and yet come to play very well ; but to be something of the real hunter, whether you wield horn, fishing-rod, or gun, you must be at it from boyhood.



HIS FIRST DAY IN A CROUSE BUTT — WEKMERGILL, N.H.

CHAPTER III

ADVANCED SHOOTING

BY ARTHUR B. PORTMAN

PHEASANT SHOOTING

FOR a great number of years now pheasant-shooting has been very popular with sportsmen here and in other parts of Europe, and most novices think when seeing these birds get up, out of low scrub or in a root field, that they are extremely easy to kill. I can, however, after many years' experience of the game, and having assisted in some of the

biggest "shoots," assure beginners that such is not the case. In fact no bird takes more killing, or is harder to shoot neatly, than a really high pheasant well on the wing.

To give some idea of the extent to which pheasants have increased during the last ninety or a hundred years: I remember reading in an old game-book kept at Riddlesworth Hall, in Norfolk—which in those days was owned by the famous racing man Mr. T. Thornhill, and, after Holkham, was rightly looked upon as one of the best sporting estates in the eastern counties—the following: "To-day we killed ninety-nine cock pheasants, a feat never before performed in Norfolk, and not likely to be done again." This was in the year 1814, and the danger and folly of trying to dip into the future, and predict what is likely to happen, has of course long since been proved in this part of England, where huge bags are of frequent occurrence. Within the last few years over two thousand pheasants have been shot in a day at Sandringham and other places in Norfolk, Suffolk, and elsewhere; estates where notably large scores have been made, outside the eastern counties, being Croxteth Hall, Lord Sefton's Lancashire estate; Bradgate, during the reign of the late Lord Stamford of racing fame; and Highclere Castle, where the present Lord Carnarvon has had some immense bags, and where in 1902 a party of five guns, of which I was one, got 1302 pheasants in a day.

As to what breed of these birds—which there is little doubt were to be found in this island prior to the Conquest—fly best, there is much diversity of opinion: personally I believe in the old-fashioned breed now so little seen, being under the impression that they, through being lighter and also not so fat, flew much better than the present birds, which are almost invariably the ring-necked kind.

To every boy on a fresh October morning there is excitement and joy in walking round some hedge-rows, and possibly going through a few small spinneys, on the chance of picking up, besides some bunnies (which, alas! owing to the Hares and Rabbits Bill, are not so plentiful as they used to be in my boyhood, around the fields), a few outlying pheasants, birds that get up with a whirr and bustle, and—although of course an absurdly easy and uninteresting mark to the experienced gunner—afford the youthful sportsman the most intense joy. If by chance he should succeed in killing the bird, instead, as is most probable, of blowing away a few tail feathers—if he hit it at all—then his pride is immense, and most rightly so too. For believe me, my readers, a boy who is not dead keen about everything—be it work, sports, or games—will grow up into a prematurely old and discontented man. To get bored and blazé is, alas! only too easy for anybody; but if in our early shooting days we are not madly keen and ready to face any weather and any conditions, however unpleasant, for the sake of a bit of sport—

be it ratting, rabbiting, or what not—long ere middle age the zest and healthy amusement derived from outdoor recreation of this kind will have flown, never to return.

A truce, though, to moralising : let us turn back to the great game. Having begun in this modest fashion, the youth will shortly be probably asked to a few very small covert shoots by relations or friends, and then will get some insight as to the flight of the “longtail” when really well on the wing, and will learn how hard it is to shoot him properly ; but of course, as a beginner, the youngster’s chances at these early shoots will be much more confined to ground game and the few pheasants that fly back over the beaters’ heads. These, mind you, frequently afford far better and more sporting shots than the forward going birds, and certainly, if the wood is at all a thick one, are most excellent practice for anybody to bring down neatly through the trees. Having had a certain amount of this sort of shooting, the young man, as he has now become, is probably invited to a few larger parties, and this means being frequently sent forward and getting good “stands.” This is the time when every shooter, no matter how nicely he may be able to knock over a few birds going back, or getting out of roots or what not, realises how terribly flurrying and upsetting is anything like a big rise of pheasants. For they come at you crossing each other and distracting your eye, so that, ere you have

decided which bird to fire at, the entire bunch are past and gone, and by the time a wild shot is eventually discharged the chance of killing anything has become highly improbable. The thing to do, the moment birds begin to come, is to fix your mind upon one, and try to kill it with your first barrel. If you fail, give the same bird your second barrel, and never try to bag another bird with your second shot, unless quite sure you have killed the one originally aimed at. To all who have not had much experience, and to many others who all their lives remain nervous bad shots, when a big flush of pheasants occurs, I am certain this is the most sound advice, although of course, as I know only too well, hard to follow in the bustle and excitement which a warm corner always naturally produces.

Having by now got to the stage of being asked about to "shoots" of more or less importance, for the sportsman to improve and become a first-class shot, it is only a question of practice and, of course, natural aptitude, with a true eye—for no amount of shooting would ever make some men even reasonably good marksmen.

It is really remarkable how some of the finest shots in the land—and I know most of them and have shot with them—have their off days, when no bird, however easy, seems within their power to kill. The general reason for this is a stomach out of order, which prevents the hand and eye from working in unison ; but other things may put one

off, nothing more so, in fact, than a coat or waist-coat which causes the least drag on the arms, and thereby prevents a free swing : without this ease, and unless he knows by practice how far to let the gun go one way or the other, a man will for ever rank amongst the duffers. No coats I have ever tried are more easy and better cut for the game than those made by Rice Brothers of New Bond Street. Besides the coat, it is of course essential that your gun fits you properly, as although, to be sure, there is a lot of rubbish talked about guns, there can be no question that a weapon either too short or too long in the stock will baulk and put off anybody.

Of course there have been many books written upon shooting by men who tell you that to kill a bird you must aim so and so, a yard or what not in front of it, according to its flight, whether a wind is behind it, what is the distance ; and who are ready with all sorts of other advice, which really, when it comes to the test in the field, is absolutely impossible. I should like to see the man who, when pheasants were coming fast, could say, "Well, I shot a yard and a half ahead of that bird, and two feet in front of the other." The whole thing is rubbish, like trying to define putting on side at billiards, this being simply a matter of "touch";¹ whilst fine shooting and killing the birds well—I mean by that always hitting them in the neck or head,

¹ In the course of stern struggles at billiards and pyramids with Mr. Portman in the past, I confess I have wished once or twice that his touch was not quite so good.—ED.

and so ensuring a death virtually instantaneous, instead of fluffing and knocking the poor things about in a manner that causes them to fly and flutter on in pain—must always be a question of swing, and letting your gun follow a bird, which only can be acquired by practice and, as I said before, natural aptitude. Of course many men, especially those who have taken to shooting long after their youth has passed, are greatly helped by going to some of the shooting parks now established round London, where the instructor, standing behind, sees and tells the sportsman who is firing just what he does wrong, whether aiming at a live bird, rabbit, or clay pigeon. This is all very well and no doubt does good, but nothing will ever make a man soar above anything except extremely moderate shooting, unless he frequently assists at shoots in the country.

GROUSE AND PARTRIDGE DRIVING

At the beginning of my remarks on these forms of sport, to many people the most fascinating there are, I would draw the careful attention of my readers, of no matter what age, to the fact that they are far more dangerous than shooting in covert. The reason is not hard to find. Owing to birds which are driven usually flying low, unless in the case, which sometimes but not often happens, of partridges being put over fairly high belts, they fly at a height which makes a careless shot

extremely dangerous for his neighbours. This being so, it is most important for the shooter never by any possible chance to follow a bird round with gun to shoulder, as I have seen some men do who ought to have known better; also, unless the bird shot at is quite high enough to be perfectly safe, on no occasion shoot at it except well in front of your butt, or else well behind the line of guns. In turning round to shoot at birds that have passed the butts, your gun should not be put up to the shoulder, as I said before, until you have faced about in the butt or whatever place of hiding you may be in. Careful observance of these rules may help to prevent accidents which have so frequently occurred in driving, by which many a man has lost an eye. Another most important thing is not to fire shots at anything between drives, as many nasty accidents have happened by people shooting whilst going from one set of stands to another, for then men are often out of line taking what they think is a short cut. Another really sound piece of advice is, take out cartridges when getting over a fence, however small, or across a ditch. In these days of hammerless-ejector guns it is surely but little trouble, and if the cartridges remain in the gun, a slip, however slight, may bring about an accident which may lead to appalling results, even with the gun at "safety."

Having given this lecture, which is not written in any spirit of interference, but owing simply to the knowledge from long experience that it should

be followed by everybody, I will turn to the sport. To commence with, we will talk about that most fascinating game, grouse-shooting, which has greater charm for many sportsmen than any other kind of sport, because of the wild and interesting country in which it is usually pursued. Of course for big bags Yorkshire stands far ahead, and at Wemmer-gill, High Force, Bolton Abbey, Askriigg, &c., huge numbers of grouse have been accounted for, which, take them all round, are not to be beaten. The biggest thing ever done single-handed was the work of that fine shot, Lord Walsingham, he having on the Bluberhouse, Yorkshire, killed by himself upwards of a thousand grouse in a day's driving. This shows extraordinary endurance, as I believe on the day he made this bag, Lord Walsingham fired well over thirteen hundred cartridges —an immense strain on the nerves. Probably two of the finest moors out of Yorkshire are Abbey-stead in Lancashire, and Ruabon Hills moors in Wales. Then in Scotland, places with a deservedly good reputation are Moy, Hunthill, Lochendorb, Meallmore, and the first of these moors holds the record for sport on the other side of the Border.

Now to turn to the actual sport of grouse-driving and how it is done. Of course almost everywhere in Yorkshire birds are driven even on the "Twelfth," as they would never allow people to get near by walking, but in most parts of Scotland grouse are "walked" early in August, and driving only taken to when the birds have become too wild to get near in

any other way. A young grouse sitting well is probably the easiest of all birds to shoot early in the season, but not when it has grown wilder ; and an old bird who sits watching on the top of a hillock, and disappears down a gully almost the moment the sportsman spies him, is very hard to kill. At the notable moors of the far North I have mentioned, no walking is done, and even by the 20th of August grouse at, we will say, Lochendorb, where a lot of the ground is flat and birds can be seen for a long way, are easily missed ; whilst if they come full speed off some of the "tops" with the wind behind them, the man who cannot get off his gun quickly will find himself with a very limited number of birds to pick up when the drive is over.

Talking of the drive being over reminds me that nothing is more reprehensible or dangerous than for a man to move out of his butt until the beaters have got quite past, as there may easily be some birds sitting tight close to the butts ; and by moving you spoil the sport of other people, even if happily it leads to no wretched accident. One of the things about grouse-driving which some people find boring, especially in Scotland, where it is in many parts extremely difficult to get a sufficient number of beaters, is the long wait between the drives ; but then if the day is only fine, and the sportsman wise enough to be pleased by the charms of scenery which he will find to perfection in the majority of moors at any

rate north of Perth, the time soon passes. Besides, if this sort of thing does not appeal, there is always a quiet pipe and chats with friends in the neighbouring butts to bring one to the exciting moment when the first birds, probably a stray old cock or so, begin to come. Shortly afterwards the coveys will be on you, and then, until the drive is over, quick eyes and quick shooting must be the order of the day, if a fair bag is to be made in Scotland, where the vast masses of grouse to be seen in a good year upon a Yorkshire moor are of course never to be found.

When the ground is flat and you see the low-flying grouse come skimming towards you, there is a great temptation to shoot at birds too early; or sometimes people, owing to lack of experience or judgment, wait until the grouse are quite close to them, which means at so near a range that the shot in a hard-shooting gun has not had time to spread at all, and therefore it is almost like shooting with a bullet—whilst the second barrel of your first gun (if shooting with two guns, quite necessary to everybody driving) has to be fired after the birds have passed the line, and your second gun is quite useless, at any rate as regards that covey. A simple and excellent thing to do in flat ground is to step, roughly, about forty yards straight in front of your butt and place there some small white thing in the heather, either a piece of paper or handkerchief. This won't turn the grouse, and, by shooting at them the moment they get about opposite

your mark, you will stand a good chance of getting in two, three, or possibly four barrels, if really quick, with a fair chance of success. In Yorkshire, with the gigantic packs which come over the guns, it may not be quite so important as where they are scarcer, but of course everywhere the man who shoots the quickest and with most sense will make the biggest bags.

A few words more ere leaving the grouse. I have spoken of flat ground, which is naturally by far the easiest to shoot over; but in many places of course the birds come swinging round the sides of or over hills without the least warning. Then it is a case of shooting quickly indeed, and the game becomes far more dangerous, as a follow round at such birds may often lead to something terrible happening. It is far better to miss endless grouse, or let any number of them go by without even firing, than to run the risk of injuring some person, which may produce lifelong regret and misery.

Now for the partridge, to my thinking a far more difficult bird to shoot than its great rival of the heather, for a grouse, if deciding to go to a certain place, will not usually turn from its flight; but a partridge frequently twists and turns in the most extraordinary manner when seeing the guns, after getting over a hedge or what not. One of the first people who went in for partridge-driving systematically was the late General Hall, who had some splendid sport at Six-Mile Bottom, of which the Duke of Cambridge has now the lease; but from

what I have seen of the place when shooting there—as I have had the honour to upon several occasions of late years—I fancy birds are not so plentiful as they used to be in the General's time. Still it is a fine “shoot.” Other great places in this district for partridges can be mentioned in Stitchworth and Dullingham—which combined make a grand partridge manor, and are now shot over by Lord Ellesmere—Cheveley Park, and Chippenham Park.

Other wonderful grounds to be found in the eastern counties are Elvedon, Holkham, Euston, Sudbourne, Houghton, Sandringham, Rendlesham, &c. Then in Hampshire there is the renowned Grange, where Lord Ashburton has made the record bag for these birds, and there are several other places in this part of England where great sport is obtained at the present day: but nowhere has partridge shooting improved so much as in Nottinghamshire, notably at those neighbouring estates, Welbeck and Rufford Abbeys. Upon the former last year the Duke of Portland and his friends killed, one day, 627 brace of partridges. The reason why these birds have increased so immensely in England during the past few decades is undoubtedly to be sought in driving, by which, especially early in the season, the old birds are killed off, and the younger and consequently less quarrelsome ones left, when the nesting season comes round, to carry on the race. It is also, however, largely due to the greatly increased care taken in changing eggs, putting down Hungarians,

&c., which, with the keeping down of vermin, means a great deal. In former days, before driving became, as it now is, general on most estates, what few partridges could be got at were killed walking in September, and if they did not happen to be very plentiful, nobody minded. Now, with most shooters extremely fond of driving, matters are very different, and doubtless the improvement will continue.

Talking of walking partridges reminds me that one of the best places possible for this game is Escrick Park, near York, where in 1896 I remember that, shooting for ten days, a party of four guns, of whom I was one, got 2008 birds, which means the splendid average for walking of more than 200 partridges a day. The great trouble in driving partridges is to get men who can work them successfully, as very few keepers seem to understand the game properly, and will not get out their flankers right, or will at any rate do something intensely foolish or boring: nothing is more aggravating than to see lots of birds breaking away either to the right or left instead of coming over the guns. To a man who will only use intelligence, the task set is not so very difficult, provided the wind does not happen to be blowing adversely, for nobody can get partridges to go in any numbers up wind; but, like a great general, a high-class and clever keeper at this game is seldom to be found, and in many years' shooting I have met only with four or five. To manage grouse seems to me more

easy, and, at the places I have been to, has almost invariably proved far more successful. To shoot partridges well, you should bear in mind and apply almost all I have mentioned as to the way to kill grouse ; but never forget, my readers, be you young or old, that it is impossible to be too careful in this most delightful but—unless you are very careful—extremely dangerous sport.

PART III.—DOGS

By ALEX. INNES SHAND



AFTER A RUN

CHAPTER I

DOGS IN BOOKS AND REAL LIFE

THE dog is the boy's best companion. "Walks with my tutor" are all very well, but walks with my dog are what he really enjoys. The dog has perhaps the best of it, in point of intelligence, but the boy gradually picks up a great deal. The boy does not mind tearing his jacket, and often lands at home after a ramble in a condition that scandalises his parents and guardians; but the dog has decidedly the pull of him in following

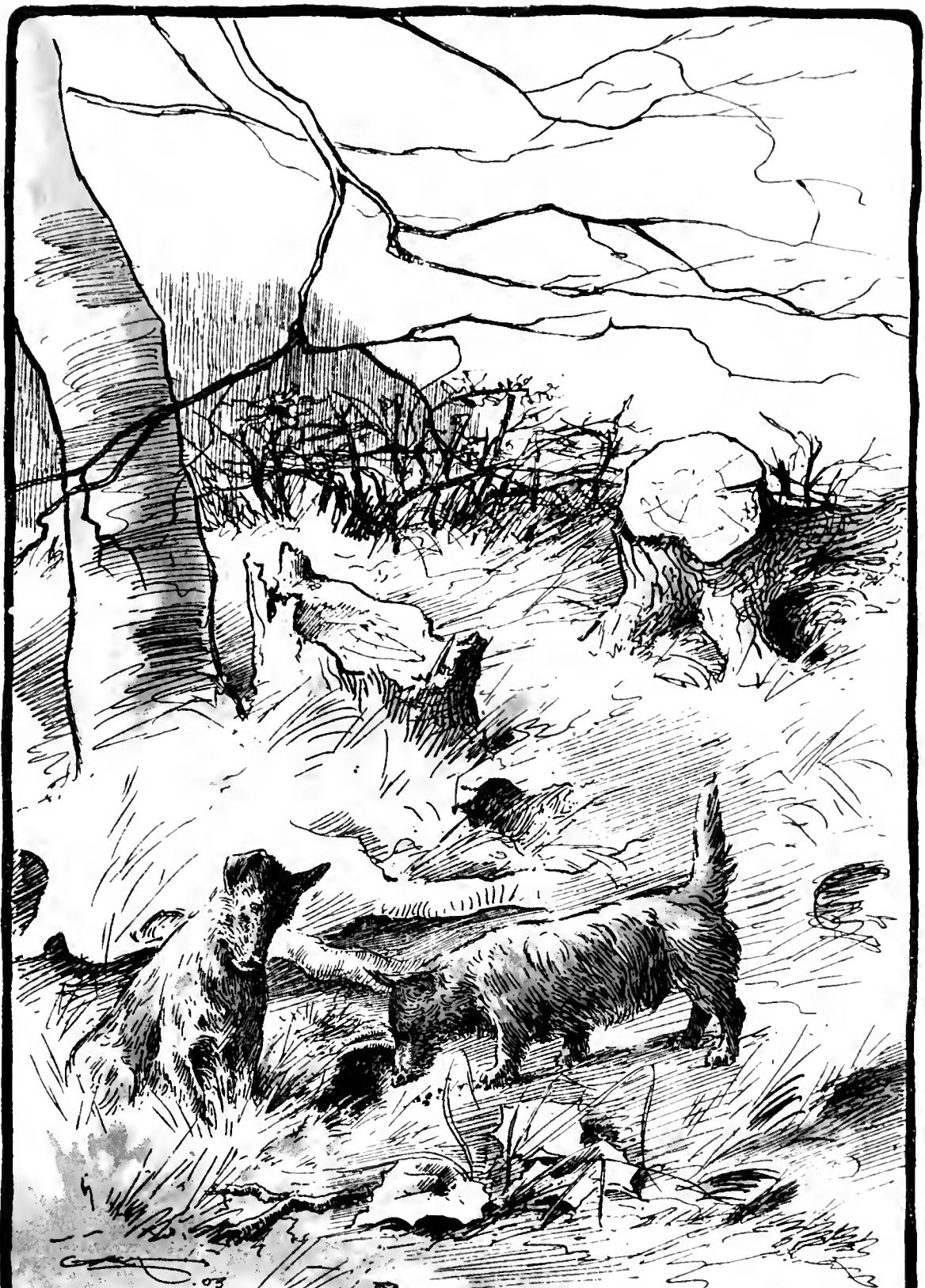
out their common pursuits. He cares even less for his coat than the boy for his jacket. He can go grubbing among thorny hedge-roots, and crawling along damp ditches ; he can even carry his researches into fox-earths and rabbit-burrows. Consequently he is always coming upon delightful surprises, startling rabbits from their seats and hares from their forms, and setting all the bird-folk of the hedge in commotion. The boy envies him the sharp yelp of fierce delight when he snaps vainly at the fud of a scuttling rabbit, and perhaps only misses by a mouthful of flick ; though, if he could, he would not care to worry the rat or the weasel, who has been the victim of a sudden spring. On the other hand, he has interests the dog cannot share. The thorns shake : there is the scream of the startled blackbird, and there is the nest with the young newly feathered, and on the point of taking flight. Or when the wood-pigeon makes a dash from the farther side of the fir, up goes the boy, hand over hand, and it is the turn of the dog to look on in disgust.

I have been talking of “the open-air boy,” and I cannot help pitying boys who have their homes in a city. It is hardly fair on a dog to keep him in town ; it is like caging a lark, accustomed to soar, and tantalising him with a miserable scrap of turf. A terrier in London, looking at the world through area railings, chasing cats who always escape him in the back yard, naturally overeats

himself, gets out of condition, and becomes misanthropic. By nature, though he is death on vermin, he is the most amiable of animals ; but in town he snaps savagely at the milkman's legs, or makes a snatch at the seat of the trousers of the butcher's boy. The worst is that his master has to bear the blame, and is for ever getting into hot water. Perhaps the business is settled by the dog being stolen, if he is worth his salt. For dog-stealing is a very lucrative trade, and professional villains are up to all manner of dodges and devices. They carry strong-smelling delicacies about with them that no dog can resist ; they watch for their opportunity at the corner of a lane, and, when you look over your shoulder, your favourite is gone. He is growling at the bottom of a sack, or in the depths of a big pocket, with a strong hand pressed upon his muzzle. Of course one is sorry for the boy, but far more grieved for the dog. Did you ever read "*Tickler among the Thieves*," by Dr. John Brown, author of "*Rab and his Friends*." If not, the sooner you get the book the better, for Dr. Brown knew more about dogs than most men. I don't mean about their breeds or their ailments, but about the inner nature, which it should be your pleasure to draw out. Tickler had been petted and pampered, and the change to the den of the thief, who punched his head and kept him on coarse commons, nearly broke the heart of the poor little fellow. That the story had a happy ending, that Tickler was restored to the bosom

of his family, has nothing to do with my moral, for Tickler had a very unusual piece of luck. It was more likely that, like Uncle Tom of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"—another book you ought to read—he would have been sold into slavery, and changed a kind for a careless or brutal master. And you may be sure that dogs have longer memories than you fancy. You have probably read the *Odyssey* with cribs, for I take it that you are not much at home in the Greek. Then you remember how Ulysses' dog recognised him at once, when he had been cruising for many years among the Greek islands on his way back from Troy. I suspect Horace was drawing the long-bow, or, to speak more correctly, indulging in poetic license, when he makes the dog recognise his old master at the first sniff. Much more natural is Sir Walter Scott's scene in "*Old Mortality*," when Henry Morton comes back from the Dutch wars to his home on the Clyde. The old spaniel he left behind, barks at the stranger, then smells round him, and finally jumps up and fawns. "The creature kens you," exclaims the old housekeeper. That gradual recognition is true to the life; but Scott knew more about dogs than Homer, and at least as much as Dr. Brown.

By the way, if any one is fool enough to laugh at you for making a friend of your dog and loving him, refer him to Sir Walter, and read Lockhart's "*Life*." The most delightful writer since Shakespeare, he still amuses hundreds of thousands of



A · PAIR · OF · POACHERS

people. He made an immense fortune, though he was unlucky enough to lose it. He was honoured by the most learned and the noblest in the land. But next to his children, he delighted in his dogs, and however hard he might be writing, his doors were never closed to one or the other. In the country, whether at Ashestiell or Abbotsford, his window was always open, so that they might go freely out and in. When his famous deerhound Maida lived, Maida always mounted guard in his study ; when Maida was off duty, he was relieved by Hintee, a solemn cat. As great a favourite was the bulldog Camp ; and when Camp died in Edinburgh of old age and infirmities, Scott buried him with his own hands in the back garden, and declined an invitation to dinner on account of the loss of a dear old friend. He had dogs of all sorts, and when he went out for a ride or a walk, he was always attended by a canine tail—a “tail” was the retinue of the old Highland chief. There were deerhounds for show and beauty and sagacity ; there were greyhounds for coursing, of which he was very fond ; there were setters and pointers for his guests to shoot over ; and there was always a tagrag-and-bobtail of terriers, which I believe amused him the most. He tells how the stately old Maida was tempted into frolics with the youngsters, but when he caught his master’s eye, fell back upon his dignity, seeming to say, “Ha’ done now ; cease your fooling.” He studied those dogs as he studied human nature. He mentions

one “shamefaced little terrier” who would sneak away and hide himself at the slightest reproof, and could only be drawn out of his retreat by the sound of a meat-chopper when the dinner hour was past and hunger had got the better of him. And he passed a broken night of great anxiety when another little fellow had dropped behind a riding party and gone astray on the moors. When I get on Scott and his dogs I have mounted a hobby, and I could go on scribbling for ever. They crop up in all his novels and poems, and the scenes and the characters are all taken from the life. Lufra, of “*The Lady of the Lake*,” is one of his fleetest greyhounds ; Maida is the Bevis of Sir Henry Lee in “*Woodstock*,” and he thrusts his muzzle, in “*Ivanhoe*,” into the hand of Cedric the Saxon in his hall of Rotherwood. Wasp, who followed the fortunes of Bertram in “*Guy Mannering*,” we know well ; and Mustards and Peppers were as plentiful about the doors of Abbotsford as at Dandie Dinmont’s homestead at Charlieshope. Then the comical situations are as true to realities as any of the Scotch pictures of Sir David Wilkie ; and if you have not laughed at “*The Blind Fiddler*,” or “*The Penny Wedding*,” the sooner you do so the better. But my hobby is bolting with me again, and I must pull up.

Scott would have been the man to consult about the best kind of dog to make a companion of, but Scott is gone. I have kept a good many sorts myself, from deerhounds stately as Maida, down to

the toy terrier I could smuggle into a coat-pocket when I went travelling abroad. I found by the way, he was always considered an acquisition to the party when he came up to breathe like an otter and insisted on crawling on to my lap. But my personal fancy is for terriers, and specially for Aberdeen terriers. I seldom go for a walk without having two or three trotting at my heels—though indeed “trotting at my heels” is another poetic license, for unless when walking through pheasant coverts or over ground swarming with rabbits, they are here, there, and everywhere—for the general characteristic of the terrier is restless activity, and his great charm is his irrepressible curiosity. His ears, or at least one of them, is always cocked ; nothing, above or below, escapes his notice ; and I have one old dog who diverted the attention of a village school-treat by following with wrapt attention the flight of a calico balloon. It was a puzzle altogether beyond his experience, and when he shook his head after trying vainly to solve the problem, I never saw a dog look more disgusted.

A queer contradiction in the terrier with his restless activity is his economising of the work that must be done. He is always going to and fro, changing from the gallop to the trot, but whenever he comes to a cross-road or a side field-path there he waits, as if he were a convict on the treadmill, who won’t take an unnecessary step. And, like other dogs of good breed, he has an extraordinary knowledge of the lie of a country. I don’t much

believe in the wonderful stories of dogs who have travelled in dog-boxes from Land's End to John o' Groat's, finding their way straight home again like homing pigeons. As I once heard the editor of *Punch* remark, if they were worth stealing they would certainly be picked up on the road. But if the youngest dog is missing in course of a walk anywhere near his home, you may be pretty sure he will turn up all right, barring thieves or accidents. Yet, till he does turn up, you can never be altogether easy. It is a fair presumption that he is in mischief, and may have got into grief. He may have been caught in a trap, or shot by a zealous game watcher when scraping at a rabbit burrow, or in his excitement he may have burrowed into the bowels of the earth and got wedged between stones or buried in a landslip. The weakness of lively young dogs for poaching is a constant sense of anxiety. When there is a pair of them knocking about in company they are perpetually in scrapes. I live where small coverts and straggling woods come up to a thick coppice at the bottom of the garden. There is a tangled bit of paddock, and the dogs stroll off innocently enough on their own property, jumping among the tufts of grass and pretending to be hunting field-mice. They know as well as I do the boundaries they are forbidden to pass. But suddenly something comes as an excuse or an irresistible temptation for breaking bounds. A rabbit starts from under a bramble and scuttles for the hedge, or a pair of partridges

in the mating season skim the grass with a whirr. Then the dogs are off and away, yelping ceaselessly in shrill discord, and when you may see them again is a question.

In my opinion Sunday is the special day on which they craftily and deliberately get into mischief. On the other six days they see you in tweeds or homespun, and are hopeful of something turning up in their line. On Sunday they know the meaning of the church bells. They assume a suitable and Sabbatical demeanour, but it is sulky rather than solemn. They see you come forth in a top hat with an umbrella, and the umbrella is a sure sign, for they know you never carry one under other circumstances. They seldom try to follow, though a puppy may sneak behind at a safe distance; but the moment you are out of sight they are planning diversion, and off they go for a long day in the woods. It is well for my peace of mind that I am friends with the surrounding keepers, otherwise the thought of wire snares and rabbit traps would disturb my devotions. I am not much afraid of the dogs being shot, for my dark terriers are "kenspeckle," as they say in Scotland, that is, there is no mistaking them. But the keepers make a good thing of catching the culprits and bringing them back. When they come home of their own accord, fagged and muddy, self-convicted by the briars and thorns on their coats, they are like the truant boy who has had his fling, and knows he has let himself in for well-merited punishment.

Conscience was silent in the excitement of the chase, but now it is very much alive. Instead of fawning and jumping up on you, they will not meet your eye, and sneak into the back regions, even when half-dying of hunger.

You must train up a dog in the way he should go, and what you must chiefly impress upon him is obedience and self-control. But gentle methods are the best, except with impracticable animals you had better get rid of, and everything may be done by kindness. When you are teaching the dog, it is good training for yourself, and sometimes patience is sorely tried. A dog-call always hangs at my button-hole, but I never carry a dog-whip, and though I sometimes lay the stick lightly over a dog's back, it is only by way of hint as to what might possibly happen. Only once did I actually chastise a dog severely, and he was the greatest favourite I have ever had. Once when I returned home after a few weeks' absence, I found he had become an incorrigible poacher, or rather hunter, for there was nothing of the sneak about his proceedings, and he never realised he was doing wrong. Servants had taken him out for walks in the woods, and were quite content to bring him home safe, waiting patiently until he had done amusing himself with the game. Taking the same walks myself, I found that my friend gave me the slip ; then I heard him, as the old writers say, making the welkin ring, as he followed hot-foot on a burning scent. His cheery cry

might have been heard over half a parish as pheasants rose rocketing over the trees, and hares came hopping out of the thickets. How the keepers' attention had not been directed to his vagaries, I don't know. Mild remonstrances, stern reproofs, sharp pulling of the ears were of no avail ; the young scamp seemed incorrigible. One day, when he was running his usual ring, I heard him coming straight for me, full cry. To eclipse myself behind a big oak was, as the story writers say, the work of a moment. By, within a couple of yards, came a hare with ears laid back, and half a minute afterwards was followed by Master Charlie, pumped and half-blown, but still with breath enough to bark. He literally jumped into my arms, and you never saw a dog so taken aback. He was as much surprised when sharp and unaccustomed chastisement followed close on the sin. For once the rod was not spared, and from that hour he became a reformed character. By the way, when he sobered down with old age, he became a pretty regular church-goer. He knew the signs of the Sabbath as well as any of his friends, and when he heard the bells he would slip away from the others to lie in wait. When I went by on the first occasion, he must have followed at a respectful distance, for I never saw him till service was over. Having tried it on successfully once, I never discouraged him in a practice so praiseworthy, for he gave no sort of trouble. I have been in

Highland churches where the collies were regular members of the congregation ; they followed the hill shepherds over miles of moor and moss, curling themselves up at their masters' feet. Generally they snored peacefully through the service, but sometimes one would waken up from a nightmare, make a snap at his neighbour, and then there would be trouble. There would be a free-fight in the passages, when the hair was flying and the shepherds flourishing their sticks, for they were shy of trusting their hands among the sharp-toothed combatants. Then the dogs would be kicked out, the doors closed upon them, and the minister, not unaccustomed to such scenes, would recommence his sermon, where he had been interrupted. But Charlie never came farther than the porch ; there he would sit out the longest service with exemplary patience, in the hope of being taken afterwards for a quiet stroll.

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All dogs have a dash of jealousy in their natures. You may take it as a general rule that the more a dog loves you, the more jealous he will be. You are patting the head or playing with the ears of a favourite, when another protests with a muttering growl, and a third remonstrates more quietly by laying his chin over your leg. That shows the difference of dispositions ; one, if he dared, would savagely resent any preference, and the other is content to steal into your affections. Puppies of the same litter, brought up in the same way, turn

out very differently. One is naturally morose, quick to take offence, and inclined to sulk ; put him out of temper, and it may be days before he will forgive or forget. Kindness and patience are wasted on his sullen nature, and the sooner you get rid of him the better. So perhaps it might be wise to do with another, whose fiery spirit keeps you in continual hot water, and yet you cannot help liking him. A born fighter, he is always picking quarrels ; on slight provocation he will go at any dog, regardless of size or strength. He is what the keepers call "varmint,"—game to the backbone, and as his failings are on the side of virtues, you love him for his pluck. I had one of the kind who had a difficulty with a bull-terrier on chain, twice his own weight. He could have cried off at any moment of the fight, but for a summer afternoon he went at the big one, time after time, retiring beyond reach to breathe between rounds. The stupid stableman who was looking on never interfered, and when I drove home that night—I had been away for the day—I heard that my little pet had at last been brought home dying, so bad that it was not thought worth while to send for a doctor. A pitiable sight he was, bleeding, tattered, and torn, stretched on the rug, with scarcely a wink or a breath left in him. I washed his wounds, bound up a thigh that had been bitten through, and was cheered to see him open one eye, when I bathed his muzzle with brandy and poured some drops down his throat. Rather than watch through the night by the patient's

bed, I took him up to my own, and was delighted to hear him tumble off towards the small hours, for it showed there was life in him still. Care and a sound constitution pulled him through, though he went on three legs to his dying day, and the first use he made of his convalescence was to go back to have it out with the bull-terrier. But knowing him, I had taken precautions ; otherwise he would probably have been killed.

Then there are shy dogs and cheeky dogs ; some want to be drawn out and others to be sat upon. I import my terriers from the far north, and it is painful and provoking too, to see the distress of a timid little animal when landed among unfamiliar surroundings. He is pretty sure to have left aching hearts behind him, and you can see in his tearful eyes and reproachful looks that he is full of sad memories of happy days. I thought I should lose one of those sensitive creatures ; for a couple of days he could not be persuaded to eat, and I believe he would have died had he not attached himself to a housemaid, who, after trying many things, tempted him with cream and Roquefort cheese. Yet that shrinking little beggar, when roused in battle, was as game as the small champion who fought the bull-terrier. That, however, is rather an exceptional case, and more often the newcomer makes himself at home from the moment of his arrival. Taken off the train, he is like a jack-in-the-box, with extraordinary stores of repressed energy. Within five minutes he is looking for rats behind

the window curtains, or romping and taking liberties with the older residents. *He* does not show any disinclination for food ; on the contrary, if you let him eat his fill, he would gorge himself like a boa constrictor. All dogs are fond of good living, and though to keep them in perfect health they should be dieted carefully and regularly, I am afraid that is a rule which I honour in the breach rather than the observance. In fact, so far as my experience goes, when dogs are unconfined, with a free run out of doors, you may indulge them moderately with impunity. Indeed when the servants take to them, you can hardly help yourself. Anyhow, three or four are generally sitting round my dinner-table, and it is then that jealousy comes out. If I did not believe it was the favour as much as the food they cared for, I should say they were detestably greedy. A dog who turns up his nose at dry bread when you are dining *tête-à-tête*, will snatch at it when surrounded with eager companions. What tempts them most is anything they will crunch, from chicken bones to biscuits, and then they are apt to be betrayed into forgetting their manners. In all my experience I have only known one or two gentlemen or ladies who took food from your hand—in a mixed company—as if conferring a favour, mouthing it as gently as the high-bred retriever, who lays a bird at your feet without ruffling a feather.

No doubt a dog who lives in the house is likely to be over-indulged, and great authorities will tell

you that he ought only to be fed once a day, and that it is more healthy for him to be kept in an outhouse, with plenty of fresh air and clean straw. Don't you believe that, or only believe it with reservations. Boys are not given to coddling either their dogs or themselves. There is nothing they hold in greater contempt than an overfed poodle or an asthmatic pug. If the boy is worth his salt, his dog in any circumstances will be in fair condition. Unfortunately no boy is his own master, and his parents may have prejudices. His mother may object to muddy feet on her carpets, or to shaggy coats, smelling strongly of damp, stretching themselves out to dry on her cushions. But if he is lucky enough to live in a house where they are not over-particular, he ought to learn what friendship and close sympathy really mean. There are many dogs that never get a fair chance, and we never know how marvellously their intelligence may be developed. The sportsman who only goes to his moors in August meets his setters or pointers for the first time; they have been kept close prisoners for nine months in the year, taken out like the captives of a penitentiary for an occasional run, and the marvel is that they are not idiots. The run of retrievers are left to keepers, who keep them on the chain and break them with the whip and the whistle. They generally work indifferently, but the wonder is that they work at all. Look, on the other hand, at the dogs of the poacher and the hill shepherd. The

poacher's lurcher is seldom pure bred ; he is a cross between the greyhound—the least intelligent of dogs—and the collie, and I have a great belief in pure breeding. But he lives with his master ; he is with him night and day, and he becomes such a finished hypocrite, that he might give points to the most accomplished area sneak. His hang-dog or furtive look he cannot help, but if any one glances at him suspiciously, he is the incarnation of injured innocence. His hunting—and lurchers almost always hunt in couples—is the perfection of dodgy strategy. He knows he is raiding in a hostile country, and with ears and nose he is always on the watch for signs of the enemy. Of course he hunts silent, but on a symptom of danger he slinks into the nearest ditch, and works back under the cover of weeds and brambles to his master. If there is no trouble, while the one dog beats the field, the other is on the watch by the hedge at the familiar hare or pheasant run. But it is when his master has made a good haul by net or snare that the serious business begins. The game is to be got off the ground, and the watchers may have taken the alarm, or the rural constable may be taking an early stroll along the lanes. Then the surest of the lurchers is sent off on patrol duty. He trots ahead, as if minding some business of his own, with cocked ears and distended nostrils. I have been told by an old villain, whom I was trying to bring to a sense of the error of his ways, and who used to chuckle over the iniquities he

professed to deplore, that he owed the competency which made his old age comfortable to the sagacity of one particular dog. "Bless you, sir," he used to say, "Solomon, with all his wisdom, was a fool to him. If he came back to you with a wink and wag of his tail, you might take your 'davit that the road was clear, and mind you, he would never speak unless he was sure. Blest if I don't believe he would have smelted out a policeman if he had turned out in a surplice, and he would wind a watcher from half a mile."

I daresay, like veterans telling of their wars, the old gentleman may have exaggerated the many anecdotes he related of that dog's sagacity. Yet I do not know, for nothing he said could surpass the well-authenticated stories of the almost super-human intelligence of the shepherd's dog. Read the autobiography of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, and his recollections of the feats of his famous collies. It may be said that seeking and gathering hundreds of scattered sheep in darkness, storm, and blinding snow-drift, or that "shepherding" in the stragglers to the folds over trackless hill pastures cut up by innumerable gills or gullies, is only the result of instinct developed by education for generations. The dog, whether trotting ahead on the hill or blinking and half dreaming on the sheepskin in the chimney-corner, is ever in touch with his master's mind, and turns naturally to his eye. From puppyhood he has been initiated in all his ways. But what is to be

said of his understanding of conversation? The Ettrick Shepherd wrote poems and novels, and may be supposed to have drawn on his imagination. But Frederick St. John, author of some of the very best books on sport and natural history, is above suspicion. And he tells us that when sitting with a shepherd one evening in his cottage on the moors, the man remarked casually in course of conversation and without changing his tone, "I'm thinking that the cow's in the corn." Whereupon his collie, who had seemed quite indifferent to their talk, jumped up, rushed to the door, saw that it was a false alarm, and curled himself up again. A few minutes afterwards the same trick was played, with the same results. The third time the victim of the joke was not to be befooled, and never moved a muscle. Then there was Scott's old favourite at Ashestiell, equally at home in human speech. The day came when he could not follow his master in his rides, and his rheumatic limbs compelled him to keep the hearthrug. Towards the dinner-hour, the butler would come into the room and say, "Camp, my man, the sheriff's coming home by the hill or by the river," as the case might be. Then the old fellow pulled himself together, and tottered out to the back or front of the house to welcome his master.

Well-bred dogs are extraordinarily sensitive to ridicule. Some of them carry self-respect to excess, and are apt to spoil pleasant company by absurd suspicion. They take an accidental laugh,

if you chance to catch their eye, as a personal insult, and if you condescend to apology by way of smoothing matters over, it takes no end of petting to reassure them. When these self-conscious animals are taken in a fault, or are guilty of any breach of good manners, the means of sharp punishment are ready to your hand. The laugh falls like a dog-whip, and the smile stings like a switch. Self-consciousness shows in another way. Dogs of a certain age feel that they have their dignity to support; all the same they are still game for frolics, even when their limbs begin to stiffen. Scott tells how his magnificent deer-hound Maida, when taken out for a ramble with the rest of his canine following, would be betrayed into undignified gambols by the playful advances of his small friends. They would go galloping in mad circles, snapping and rolling over each other; then of a sudden Maida would recollect himself, and assume a chilling solemnity of demeanour. "Ha' done, youngsters," he would say, with a twinkle out of the corner of his eye; "don't you see the sheriff is looking?" So when I have been sitting immersed in a book, I have heard a scrambling and scraping on the carpet. An asthmatic veteran, with a leg and a half in the grave, is furiously worrying a grandson of his own, who enters with such spirit into the sport that he is shamming exhaustion and speedy dissolution. In my amusement, I forget to sham unobservant, and the game is broken off, to the surprise and

disgust of the young one who fails to grasp the situation. All dogs are born actors, though of course they improve with experience and practice. When preparing to romp, they always try to look more preternaturally solemn, though in the prospect of the impending fun, the laughter will bubble up.

Honest dogs only go in for acting by way of diversion, but those who have been badly brought up, or bred on short commons in the gutters, cultivate hypocrisy as a fine art. The scamps who hang about street corners and live by their wits, have brought the dogs they keep to high perfection. I have been told by a gentleman who sold sausages and mutton pies at a stall in Whitechapel, that the boys were a bother to him, but the dogs were far worse. He always knew that boys meant mischief, and was on the outlook, but there was no dodging the dogs. One hardened criminal, a cross-bred bull-terrier, would sneak up under the stall, wagging his tail, a picture of indifference, then when he saw his opportunity, make a spring and a snatch. With dogs like these, of course, a respectable boy has nothing to do, but his own friends of honourable descent and unexceptionable training may let him in when he least expects it. I have told my terriers that they must stay at home, and they quite understood. Their disappointment, as they sneaked back into the house, apparently renouncing all hope of the expected walk, has so touched me that I have felt inclined to give up the engagement. The

little humbugs were laughing at me all the time. An hour afterwards, in the gay crowd at a garden party, they were creeping, shamefaced, out of the shrubs, knowing that I could not punch their heads in the circumstances, and from experience of weakness in the past, hoping for a free pardon.

Dogs are sociable, and the most aristocratic in their habits and tastes will on occasion take up with low acquaintances. I don't take any exception to that, for I daresay an ungainly cur may have many good qualities and be a pleasant companion. What I dislike is, that the aristocrat who enjoys his humble friend's company on the sly will cut him dead on occasion, in the most shameless fashion. I knew a silken-coated Sussex spaniel, a lady's pet, who got bored to death with long carriage-drives and short strolls in the garden. The surly mastiff chained in the stable-yard would have nothing to say to him, and there was no other dog about the place. A rat-catcher was engaged for a few days, and the arrival of his scratch pack sent Fido into exuberant spirits. It was pleasant to see him inciting them to gambols about the flower-beds, knocking the carnations about, and turning somersaults in beds of pansies. Naturally when she went out with her mistress, her poor friends came at her with a rush, and her embarrassment would have been pitiable if it had not been so contemptible. It was the other dogs one was sorry for; accustomed to hard knocks, they were naturally modest, but I did not envy Fido his feelings when she met

their reproachful glances, as, bewildered and taken aback, they humbly tucked their tails between their legs. Now my Scotch terriers are of more sterling metal. The butcher's dog, a squat bull-terrier, with a dash of the collie, comes every morning for orders, and they often ask him to stay. They bring him on to the terrace before the windows, and do their best to entertain the guest. They make no secret of the intimacy, but keep it within certain bounds. They acknowledge him, rubbing noses in the fashion of the South Sea Islanders, when he comes up, wagging his stump of a tail as we pass through the village street. But they have taught him never to presume, and he knows better now than to join company, as he would do very gladly. When he tried it on, refusing to take a hint, after a glitter of teeth and some show of savage fighting, he was rolled ignominiously into a ditch. Now they are as good friends as before, but he understands his place and keeps it.

It is impossible to lose a dog in a neighbourhood he knows, unless he lets himself be picked up, which is unlikely. He naturally gives strangers a wide berth, and it is long odds against his coming across a professional dog-stealer with such an irresistible lure as is valerian for cats. But as a rule he will take his time about getting back, causing his master much unnecessary anxiety. How he passes the time is a mystery, for even an inveterate poacher will seldom go on the hunt single-handed. The only exception I knew was an exceedingly handsome

animal, with soft, lustrous eyes like those of a roe deer. He was timid, and seemed to know that his beauty was a danger; at any rate, however briskly I stepped out after missing him, I always found him in waiting at the door. His lustrous eyes were intelligent, and in some ways he was sharp, but in others provokingly stupid. If I slammed a field gate, barred close to the ground, in his face, with a stiff hedge matted at the roots on either side, he would never make a détour to scramble through somewhere else, unless there was a companion to give him a lead. He would simply whine and struggle at the bars till he gave up in despair and went back. On principle I never helped him, though it is hopeless to teach an old dog new tricks. On the other hand, the most accomplished burglar was never cleverer at getting into strange houses. On the rare occasions when I make afternoon calls, my dogs are trained to wait on the steps or the gravel. Poly's impatience or affection would get the better of him after a time. There was one great rambling mansion, shut in by garden doors and yew hedges, where the people, to their misfortune, detested dogs, and consequently I was extra particular in the orders to mine. One day I made some civil apology for bringing them, but said they were all right outside, and there was no fear of their intrusion. The door opened, the servants brought in the tea-tray, followed by Poly wagging his tail. He must have sneaked round, forced the kitchen door, threaded a perfect labyrinth

of passages, and scented me out. He was either so stupid or so sharp as to take it for granted I was glad to see him, and began dancing gracefully after his fashion, like Esmeralda's kid in Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame*, another book you ought to read. Good looks and pretty manners go for a great deal, after all ; instead of being kicked out, neck and crop, he was stuffed with the tea-cakes, and in five minutes was rolling over the children on the rug. Talking of burglars, by the way, if you want to persuade your parents to let you keep a dog within doors, you can't use a better argument than the security against thieves. Dogs on chain may be drugged or poisoned ; but housebreakers always survey premises beforehand, and the boldest will never attempt a house with a yelping terrier inside to give the alarm.

Dogs and cats have a natural antipathy, which is apt to get the dog-keeper into hot water. It is inbred and hereditary. The cat spits defiance and bristles her back, then bolts, and the dog naturally follows. Taking refuge on a wall or in the nearest tree, she tantalises him beyond canine endurance. Next time when he has his chance on the ground, he goes in and takes his revenge ; though a cornered cat is a dangerous enemy, and even when the odds are three to one against her, she parts very hardly with the proverbial nine lives. But even when dogs and cats have not been brought up together from puppy-hood and kittenhood, there is never any difficulty in keeping the domestic peace. It would be

a mistake to bring a bull-terrier, bred in the slums and trained to fly at all and sundry, into the bosom of a peaceful family. Probably the pet tabby would be in tatters before she knew where she was. But an honest sporting dog, even with cat-chevying propensities, is prompt to recognise the changed situation. At first there is armed and suspicious neutrality. The cat's back goes up at a moment's notice ; the dog keeps his cold grey eye on her, with lips drawn back for a snarl and teeth ready for a snap. But in a very few days things settle down, and they are not only friends, but on the footing of lovers. The cat, with her insidious ways, has a fancy for rubbing up against anything warm, as all dogs delight in being gently rubbed down. I have a misanthropical black terrier, who long turned a cold shoulder to feline advances and suggestions of soft caresses. But gentle perseverance got the better of him at last, and now he and his chum are inseparable. Sometimes, it is true, like all spoiled members of the rougher sex, he finds her endearments a bore, and growls a warning that he is not in the humour. Even when he shows his teeth, she seems rather to like it, for she knows it is his manner rather than his mind. In a few minutes, you hear her again on the full purr, and his tail is being won to a wag, as she arches herself under his chin, with her own tail in the air. Yet that terrier is a hereditary cat-hunter, and when we take our walks abroad, I am never altogether easy. Other dogs, as a rule, give chase as a matter of

course, but as they neither wish nor hope to have a worry, no harm is done. Even if the cat, in place of bolting, turns to bay, the dog does not turn jest to earnest. Jack knew as well as any of them that he was expected to keep the peace, and for days he would doggedly resist temptation. Then the worrying demon would get the better of him : he would break out like a wild Scandinavian berserker or a Malay running amuck ; sometimes he showed the subtlety of the savage Red Indian. When he meant mischief most, he managed matters quietly. He saw a sleek pussy imprudently sunning herself some yards from the threshold of her happy home. He dropped behind, let his master get well ahead, and then deliberately stalked his unsuspecting victim. A gurgle in the throat he gripped, a crack of the backbone, and he resumed his trot as if nothing had happened. There was no breaking him of the vice, and yet he had so many sterling qualities that I could not make up my mind to part with him. For myself, I take to cats almost as kindly as to dogs, and I should have felt more deeply for bereaved cottagers had they not been so easily consoled with half-crowns. All the same, he was a costly dog.

In towns, as I said, you must keep the dog under difficulties, and do the best you can, with the terror of losing him. If the city dog does not sicken, he loses flesh and spirit, and if you are really attached to him, you should give him

away. But even when living in the country or the suburbs, it may be impossible to let the dog have the run of the house, and perhaps you may take a fancy for breeding, or even keep a couple or two of beagles. Then they must be accommodated out of doors, though neither you nor they will like it, and you will lose much of the pleasure of each other's society. But with regular exercise there is no reason why the dogs should not be in capital condition, especially if they have never been used to anything else ; and indeed in confinement they are on a healthier regimen, as they get their wholesome meals "more regular." A yard is of course better than the chain, but it must be a yard where there is little coming or going, and whence escape is impossible. For double security, the door should be doubly latched. Next to that, perhaps, comes a loose-box in a stable, where the prisoner can frisk about and has no sense of chains and fetters. It may be assumed that a good stable is well ventilated, but then there is the lack of light and sunshine, and the loss of the human society which the dog delights in. Naturally, he will have made friends with the grooms and helpers, but they only see to the horses at stated hours. Spying on his privacy through a window, I have seen such a dog, with one ear pricked and the other turned to the pavement, listening wistfully to the approaching tread of a foot, and dashing eagerly against the bars when his acquaintance stepped in. He had been craving for an hour or two for human fellowship, and the

visits of the stable cat were poor consolation. Then when the key is turned upon him at night, I daresay he feels like the soldier under punishment when sentenced to the dark cells. All the same, that dog, with food in plenty, water-trough well filled, and an abundance of wheat-straw, is not to be pitied. He has the free play of his limbs, his shapes are not spoiled, and his coat is sleek and shining.

You cannot say so much for the captive on chain. If he is of a lively disposition, he is always plunging forward when any one passes, either in sheer sociability, or to get a pat or pull of the ear, or in the elusive hope of having a bite at the legs of a beggar or butcher's boy. So, especially before bones and muscles are set, shoulders and loins are apt to be dragged out of symmetry. Then the collar rubs the hair off the neck, and the ribs are fretted against the door of the kennel. For every reason, the longer the chain is the better, though it should have a swivel attached, to prevent entangling, and the kennel should be against a wall, so that the dog may not wind himself up. Chaining may be unavoidable, but it tends to make an amiable dog savage, even when malicious people are not suffered to play tricks with him, keeping just beyond his reach. Yet with a long chain and a sweet temper, and without ever stretching his legs beyond their cramped precincts, a dog may rub through a long life wonderfully well. I never had a dog I loved better than a magnificent Esquimaux ;

yet after he came to years of discretion—of indiscretion in his case—I could never give him his liberty. I got him as a puppy, and he came of a family of roving propensities, who seemed to fancy themselves still in their native Labrador. All his relatives had come to grief and been reported missing, for the friend who gave him me lived among pheasant preserves, where four-footed poachers, taken red-handed, had short shrift. Griff, as I called him—he was rather like the griffin before the Law Courts—behaved admirably as a juvenile ; he would come to whistle like a spaniel, and follow quietly at heel. I went abroad for a winter, and when I came back he was demoralised and incorrigible. He had gone hunting on his own account ; he was the terror of the farmers and the horror of the keepers, and had I not been on the best of terms with these neighbours, he would not have survived to welcome me warmly. I tried to bring him back to discipline, but it was no use. He would trot quietly behind me for half a mile or so, then break off, and I would hear his deep-mouthing bay among the hedgerows half a parish away. He never worried sheep, but he chased them till they huddled together breathless ; in pure spirit of mischief and the joy of the chase, he even chevied colts and young cattle. As to the hour when he might come home, it was altogether a toss-up. When he was missing, the wear and strain were tremendous, for, as I say, I never loved a dog more ; but

there was nothing for it, in his own interest, but to sentence him to the chain for life. In his exuberant vitality, in his passion for a good gallop, he felt it keenly ; he could not understand being put under restraint, and at first his reproachful looks and lamentable whining cut me to the heart. The pity was that he was supremely intelligent, one word of explanation would have put matters straight. He only needed to have the error of his ways pointed out to him and he would have become a model character. As it was, with his sound philosophy he became a model of resignation ; but the point is that he lived for very many years in perfect health, and passed away peacefully with no other ailment than age.

With all his life and fire, with his sweet temper he took his durance cheerfully, and was an exception to the rule. But some breeds of big dogs don't seem to mind the chain ; the bulldogs and the mastiffs have been yard dogs or attached under the waggons from time immemorial. They were only taken off chain, from time to time, to bait a bull or draw a badger. Consequently, immemorial restraint has aggravated their natural savagery. They were the sort of dogs who were let loose of a night in the yards of the old posting-houses, where chaises with valuable luggage were left otherwise unguarded ; or they were turned out on patrol round some lonely manor-house, when tramps or gipsies or housebreakers were about. In evil neighbourhoods these watchdogs

were seldom long-lived, for they were apt to be poisoned out of pure malice. These heavy dogs seldom care about much exercise ; they take life quietly, like gouty old gentlemen, and love to lie blinking and snoring in the sunshine. All the same, I should not advise you to trust to that, for they are all sinew and muscle, and as ready for a spring as a panther. And when their jaws have closed on your leg like the teeth of a spring-trap, hot irons will hardly make them let go. Yet I have known active mastiffs and amiable bulldogs. One of the best retrievers I ever met—at least for any four-footed thing, from red-deer to rabbits—was three-fourths mastiff and one-fourth bull-terrier ; out rabbit-shooting he would jump about among the sandhills like the briskest little spaniel or terrier. And the only bulldog I ever owned was an impostor. He came of a famous breed, and I had offered him a home in his old age, when the master who loved him moved into London. I never saw a more truculent countenance ; it would have sent him to the gallows, on mere suspicion, in any law court in Europe. No doubt his ancestors had submitted to the brutal mutilation, which cut lips and jaw about to show the teeth. But appearances are deceptive, and he was the most good-tempered of mortals ; it is true that till he came to me, he had never been on chain, but always kept in a yard. I tried to take him out for walks, but gave it up. His massive frame was cast in iron, but his feet were in no sort of condition. The

slow walk became a waddle, and after half a mile or so the weight of the body would tell, and he turned back. At first the village girls gave him a wide berth, and the children ran screaming to their mothers' petticoats. But soon they came to know him better, and the solitary walk back became a triumphal promenade. He would stop to talk to innumerable friends ; the children would be tumbling over him, pulling ears and tail, and he would be tempted into cottages where tea was going forward.

If you must put a dog on chain, you are bound to make him comfortable. The first thing is to see that he is always supplied with fresh water ; indeed all dogs should have water within reach, with a lump of sulphur in it. It is wonderful how much and how often a dog will drink, even in cool weather ; he seldom passes a pool or puddle without dipping his tongue, and the first thing he does on coming home, is to rush off to his drinking-cup. The next thing is to protect him from wind and wet. It is odd how stupid old fashions linger, and the kennel is generally made with the door in front. On the contrary, the opening should always be on the side, so that, though the quarters cannot at best be very comfortable, there is a snug recess where he can roll himself up. A barrel, with the lower part boarded up, is better than the ordinary wind-trap. Whether barrel or kennel, it should be raised a few inches above the ground, like tropical bungalows in malarious climates.

Free ventilation prevents the boards from rotting, and the damp from soaking into the straw. The wheat-straw should be in plenty and frequently renewed, and in cold weather there should be the luxury of a rug or piece of blanket, carefully dried and aired. From time to time the kennel must be washed out with soft soap, and scrupulously dried before the bedding is renewed. Some people hold to aromatic pine-shavings as a safeguard against vermin, but they are not such comfortable lying as wheat-straw.

As to feeding dogs on chain, they cannot be indulged as those that have liberty. And there is no greater mistake than tying them down to a monotonous diet. Oatmeal porridge is excellent, so are dog biscuits ; but to keep a prisoner in fair condition, his palate should be tempted with variety. On the other hand, you should appeal to the good sense of the servants, who are apt to fill his platter with the refuse of the table. Give him bones to amuse himself with, by all means, but courses of cold entrées are sure to upset his digestion, and breed all manner of skin diseases. Old dogs should have a bellyful once in the day ; the staple should be hot oatmeal and these biscuits. Meat should be given occasionally, though of course there is meat in the dog biscuits, which are both wholesome and nourishing. Confinement is apt to make a dog costive, and nothing gives easier relief in a mild case than liver, or boiled vegetables mixed with the oatmeal porridge. As for puppies shut up in

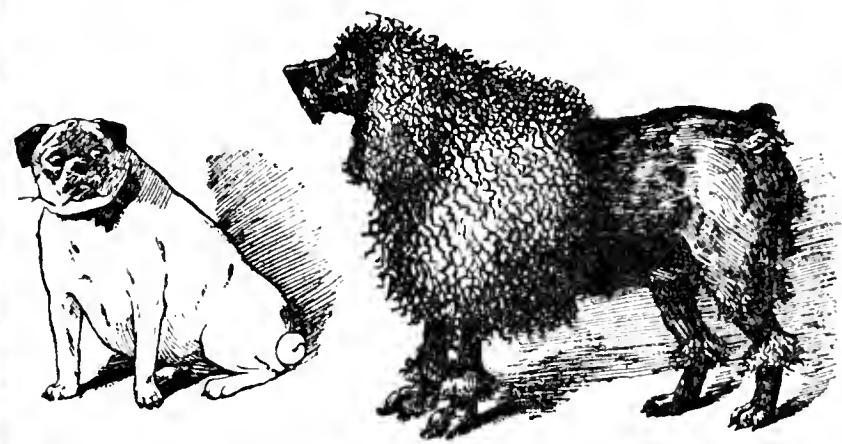
a stable or outhouse, they should have little at a time, and be fed often.

Fifty years ago, or less, it was the fashion to crop the ears and tails of game terriers. Happily the fashion of ear-clipping has gone out of favour ; though as to the tails, when they were docked a week or two after birth, it really did not hurt. The correct thing was to bite them off. One of my earliest recollections is looking out of the nursery window and seeing an old gentleman, in a flowered flannel dressing-gown, and dressed in cast clothing —he did all manner of odd jobs about the back premises—biting off the tails of a litter of spaniels. The mother ran from one to another, licking the wounds, and in a few minutes her children seemed to have forgotten all about it. In the case of spaniels, there is something to be said for the operation, though I do not think myself there is much in the argument. It is maintained that for a dog meant to work in thick cover, a bushy tail is an encumbrance, as it catches in brambles and thorns. In point of fact, where the dog can tear a way, the tail will follow without catching. There was more reason in trimming the ears of bulldogs and bull-terriers, when their vocation in life was understood to be fighting ; the ear gave a grip to the enemy in a fight, and would be torn into ribbons when drawing a badger. But the badgers have been going the way of the wolves and the wild cats : the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have a word to say to the sporting publican

who kept a badger in his yard ; and it is only among barbarians of the coal and iron counties that dogs are deliberately pitted in single combat. Any interference with the wise arrangements of Nature is simply changing beauty into deformity ; and mutilation in any shape, as it is opposed to humanity, is discredited nowadays by the judges at dog shows.



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BOYS
HOLD IN
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CHAPTER II

BREEDS OF DOGS

WRITING for boys, it is no sort of use going through the long catalogue of breeds. What you want is a good friend and cheery companion. Some dogs are naturally fools, others are delicate, and only to be recommended if you care for sick-nursing; some, like the lurcher, are irreclaimable blackguards, and if you gave in to their ways would be sure to demoralise you. Then there are the staghounds and the foxhounds, death on deer or fox, extraordinarily sagacious in their special lines,

but neither generally clever nor sociable. There is no prettier sight than a level pack of foxhounds ; no more exhilarating music than theirs when they are flying hot-foot on a burning scent, waking the echoes in the woodlands, and running so close that a sheet might cover them. There are boys lucky enough to hope one day to be masters of hounds, and there can be no more honourable ambition for an English county gentleman. Those favourites of fortune, born with silver spoons in their mouths, are few, but there are many who may become masters of beagles, and better sport no boy need desire.

The beagle is really a foxhound in miniature, as keen in the nose and as hot on the chase ; only instead of getting together a costly pack, two or three couples will be enough for amusement. The beauty of the beagle is its diminutive size, and the smaller they are the better, as you follow the chase on foot, and the pace should never be too severe. Fifteen inches at the shoulder is an outside height ; twelve is better still, and it is seldom you get them much lower. If the hare ran straight away, like a tough old dog-fox, her pursuers would have no chance with her ; but the nature of the hare is to dodge and twist and turn. The little fellows hunt her with the bloodthirsty perseverance of a weasel after a rabbit—noses and eyes on the ground, yelping ceaselessly. Nothing can be more animating than the merry music ; you feel as if there were quicksilver in your legs and springs

in your boot heels, as you go bounding over ditches, crashing through hedges, and coming a nasty cropper now and then, when you trip over rabbit-holes or furze-roots. The music ceases of a sudden, and you are not sorry to have breathing time, for your heart is beating at the double, though you know your wind was good. The tiny pack has been thrown out, and is casting to take up the trail again. There, they have it; there is a sharp note of delighted discovery from a veteran you have learned to trust—you could tell that keen yelp among a hundred—as the chorus swells again. To tell the truth, the hare generally has the best of it, and carries her fud away unscathed though there are stories of famous old packs of beagles who invariably wore down and worried their prey. In these days when hares have been proscribed by Act of Parliament, it is as well they should get away to give sport another time. And if you ever have the chance, nothing will excite you more than going out roe-shooting in the Highlands, with beagles to start the game and keep it going. Of course, the little dogs are far too sensible to think they can tackle such a monster as a roe. All the same, they hunt him as hard as if they hoped it. If the roe were wise he would show them a clean pair of heels. Agile above all animals and fleet of foot, in his graceful bounds he can clear bushes twice his own height. But he is loth to leave the woods he inhabits. Unlike the hare, he does not twist and turn, but he runs in rings and

seems to play with his pursuers. As you stand on some knoll in a clearing you catch flying glimpses of him through the tree stems : now he is bounding as if the hounds were on his haunches ; then he pulls up and bends his head to listen. The clamorous little beagles come nearer and nearer. With a leap he is across the ride and tearing through the opposite thicket. I rather believe that he knows that water drowns scent, and takes advantage of any streamlet that comes in his way. Independently of the difference in length of legs, in any case the beagles are hard put to it ; if they cannot wriggle under the thickets, they have no weight to break through. But their clamorous and inveterate perseverance absorbs the roe's attention, and unless a friendly whiff of tainted air gives him warning he forgets to look out for the guns. He comes glancing through the boughs beneath that knoll, where you stand sheltering behind the pine : rolls over to a charge behind the shoulder, and you are very sorry you have shot him when you look into those beautiful eyes, quivering and closing in the dimness of death. You vow you will never be guilty of such another murder, and you never are—till the next time. Then the little beagles come straggling up one by one—panting, with tongues hanging out, after their tremendous exertions—with burrs and fir-needles clinging to their ears, and their sleek coats torn by the thorns, smeared here and there with blood-streaks. For though there is a breed of rough beagles, as a rule they are smooth, and Nature

never intended them for such rough Highland work, where the thickets are like so many *chevaux de frise*, and the thorns tear like the spinifex of the Australian deserts. A pack I used to run after, when hunting in Dorsetshire, were more in keeping with the surroundings. In woods where the tall Scotch firs rose clean as cathedral columns, with a soft carpeting, in brown and green, of needles and lichens, over rough heath and tussocky grass, enclosed by ditches and turf banks, you could keep the chase in view almost from start to finish.

In such a country and in the home woods, you may do as you please and there is no fear of trouble. But if you—or at least, your father—are not, like Robinson Crusoe, monarch of all you survey, you must remember that there is a law of trespass. Farmers will not always sympathise with your sporting tastes, and they have a prejudice against having their hedges broken or their spring wheat trampled down. But on the whole they are good fellows, kindly to boys, and a great deal may be done by civility, if you solemnly promise to do them no harm. It is well to take precautions beforehand, and rubbing down a rough-spoken farmer the right way is excellent practice in diplomacy. If you don't, your beagles will assuredly land you in grief, and I have heard of cases where the enthusiastic huntsmen have been collared and cudgelled. It was rough justice, but bringing actions for assault seriously adds to the expenses of a pack.

As the beagle is the dwarf of hunting dogs, the stately deerhound is the giant. Sinewy and compact, of massive muscle, he is a magnificent type of the stalwart Highlander. Now, however, he is used in only a few of the deer-forests ; his swift pursuit is thought to drive the deer out of bounds, and slower dogs are employed on the trail of the wounded hart. Nowadays, perhaps the finest specimens are to be found in the south, though, strange to say, he has never become fashionable, and fetches nothing like the prices of St. Bernards. Unlike the English greyhound, he is intelligent and eminently companionable ; he becomes strongly attached to his master, and if a boy has the rare good luck to possess one, he is a friend to be proud of. I fondly remember one I owned, and was very reluctantly compelled to part with. I bought him when a kennel in a Ross-shire forest was broken up. He had attained full strength, and had already made himself famous by pulling down a "cold" stag—that is, an unwounded one—a very remarkable feat. The deerhound is rough and shaggy as a rule ; Oscar was smooth, and they say that when there is a smooth puppy in a litter, he is always the strongest. He stood thirty-three inches at the shoulder, and that is an excessive height ; thirty inches is about the average of a powerful and perfect dog. But Oscar, unusually tall as he was, did not run to light loins or feeble limbs. It was fortunate that he was of a singularly amiable temper, for he was a formidable enemy

to tackle: with a long snake-like head, a pair of alligator jaws, furnished with a set of teeth like razors. When I bought him, I brought him south to live in Edinburgh, and he soon accommodated himself to his city surroundings. But the raiding propensities of his ancestors were strong in him, and when he followed at heel in walks along the streets, he always had an eye on the stalls in poor quarters. His height brought him on a level with the board; he never could resist a tempting delicacy, and would make a snatch at a bullock's heart or a scrag of mutton. Then the hue and cry would be raised, and there would be the scandal and cost of a settlement. I mention that weakness as illustrating his strength. Once a great, strong-built mastiff on guard caught him in the act of robbery, and very properly flew at him. Oscar dropped the mutton, had the mastiff by the back of the neck, rolled him over in the sawdust, and shook him like a kitten. The watchdog's master, who was rushing forward with a cleaver, came to a full stop when he saw Oscar crouch for a spring; luckily I was at hand and had my fingers in his collar, and at a word the roused lion was gentle as a lamb. Otherwise he gave no trouble in a town, except that, for a modest man, his good looks attracted attention which was embarrassing. He trotted closely at heel, occasionally rubbing his muzzle against my hand to remind me he was there. And when I rode, he followed the horse at a gentle stretching gallop. He was a dark

brindle, and that, to my taste, is the best colour, though some fancy dogs have been light grey or fawn. I kept him in the house: he slept on a rug in my bedroom, and he would have been an unobjectionable inmate in the best regulated family, had it not been for his size, which he could not help. In the frolicsome gambols of which he was rather fond, he would upset the tables and smash the crockery. Altogether he was an expensive friend, but had I not been going abroad, I should never have parted with him. He was so handsome that I got a handsome price from an English gentleman who leased a forest. But he only passed one other season in his native north, and I believe he ended his days in Hertfordshire.

Deerhounds are death on wounded deer, because, unlike the greyhounds, they hunt by scent as well as sight—an invaluable quality on broken ground among the glens and rugged hills of the Highlands. They were much in use before the improvement of the rifle made the average stalker's aim more fatal, and the breech-loading multiplied his chances. Moreover, in former days, before deer were strictly preserved and good stalking grounds fetched fancy rents, the forests were of greater extent, and the cry of the hounds did little harm, for the herds only shifted from one part to another. In the actual chase they always run mute, but when the stag is brought to bay they awaken the echoes far and near with their deep-throated baying. There was no dog Landseer so much delighted to paint, and

all the hounds in his most notable pictures are portraits. He decorated the walls of Lord Henry Bentinck's lodge of Ardverikie with stalking scenes, and the loss was irreparable to artists and sportsmen when it was burned down. And he illustrated Scrope's "Deerstalking" with stalking sketches. Scrope, who was the most famous stalker of his day, had the range of the vast forest of Athol, where the hounds could be slipped with impunity. There were deer and to spare, and the boundaries were wide. He gives the most thrilling account of those chases : the wounded hart is a knowing strategist, and always faces his pursuers in the least approachable position. He will turn to bay in some torrent, with a rock at his back, and a cataract or the swift rush of deep water before him. And he can use his horns with the flexibility of a skilled fencer's wrist : they rip like the tusks of a wild boar, but the wounds are said to be more deadly. As an old rhyme has it—

" If thou art wounded by a hart, it brings thee to thy bier ;
But boar's wound will barber heal"—

for the barbers in old times practised surgery. Scrope's best story tells of his favourite dogs, on slippery rocks, forgetting the extreme danger in their excitement, when each sweep of the stag's horns sent them back, with their hind legs on the verge of an abyss. No wonder that there was a tremor in his hand when he fired the shot that saved them. But the most famous of all

deerhounds was Maida, who from puppyhood to old age was Sir Walter Scott's constant companion. He was always at his master's feet when the best of the Waverley Novels were being written, and he was laid to rest under a marble monument, with a Latin epitaph made memorable by a slip in the Latinity.

The Newfoundland is another imposing figure, of dignified and gentlemanly bearing. Enormously strong, he seldom presumes on his strength, and yields to none in sagacity and fidelity. He is hardy, as might be presumed from his birthplace, the breeding region of those dense, cold fogs which are constantly bringing ships to grief on bleak and inhospitable shores. He is almost as much at home in the water as on the land, and many times his rescue of drowning men should have earned him the medals of the Humane Society. On chain there can be no better watch, but in ordinary circumstances it is cruel and needless to chain him, for he is exceptionally docile and obedient. Of course there is the objection, as a house dog, that his coat carries a deal of mud, and when he shakes himself after a thorough soaking, he sprinkles the furniture far and near. For he is clothed very suitably for the Newfoundland climate: the hair on his head is thick and short, but it curls or feathers all over the body in a heavy pile like an Axminster carpet. The soft, hazel eyes are full of intelligence, though rather small for the massive head. All the better perhaps for a

swimmer, who delights in breasting the breakers. The deep, broad chest and the powerful loins seem built to support a human being in the water. Naturally, the Newfoundland, too, is celebrated in legend and literature, and many marvellous tales are told of his philanthropy and pluck. He is a favourite shipmate of Canadian skippers, and they spin many a yarn of how, when a hand had tumbled overboard, the cabin dog was in the water before the life-buoy. "Christopher North," who was a poet and a wonderful prose writer, glorifies his noble Bronte in the fanciful "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*." But as "Christopher" was the Professor Wilson of the Edinburgh University, so Bronte really and actually existed; nor did his master—who lost him by poison—exaggerate his heroic qualities. Wilson was a great lover of the Newfoundland, and as Bronte was the favourite of his middle age, Fro was the friend of his boyhood. "Christopher in his Sporting Jacket" is worth reading as an autobiography of the writer's early exploits under difficulties in fishing and shooting, and you will hear how Fro had it out with a carter's mastiff in Homeric combat, and how at peril of his own life he saved a boy from drowning. I feel sure that Fro was as real a personage as Bronte, for though after many years his master seems to write of him with tears in the eyes and a swelling in the throat, yet he does not blink his faults. Fro, as little quarrelsome as any of his kind, had been egged on to that battle with the mastiff;

but, like Christopher, who pleads guilty to the inexcusable cruelty of cat-hunting, at times he was betrayed into indiscretions. By the way, Lord Byron's Boatswain is another historical character.

It is not every one who can afford to buy a well-bred St. Bernard. Fifty pounds is a long price to pay, and prize-winners have fetched ten times that money. But he is a magnificent dog to possess, though perhaps his sagacity has been overrated, for he is the hero of many legends. It was to the monks of the hospice on the high St. Bernard pass, rather than to the dogs, that so many wayfarers, perishing in the snowdrifts, were indebted for their rescue. No doubt the dogs' noses came in usefully when the good monks were blinded by the blizzard, and the traveller, shrouded in the snow, had been settling for his last sleep. As the deerhound, if banished from the forests of the north, will surely survive in England, much more will that be the case with the St. Bernard, whatever may befall him in the Alps. He is not only become fashionable, but the cream of the fashion, and it is a fashion likely to last. Nearly forty years ago, what with rough winters, avalanches, and other accidents, the race in Switzerland must have been nearly extinct. When I slept at the Hospice I saw, to my regret, that there was only one bitch there with a weakly puppy. To be sure, there were other puppies at milk in the Martigny Valley, but puppies they were, and there was the risk of distemper. It was a relief, in returning from Italy by the Simplon Pass, to

find, at the branch establishment below the crest, a stalwart male and female sunning themselves on the steps. Perhaps the monks at the St. Bernard had said nothing of them, because their coats were smoother than they ought to have been, and not altogether correct in colour. Be that as it may, the breed seems to have got up again there, and I believe the race was replenished from England. For Englishmen took to importing them, and notably Albert Smith, the comic entertainer, who was filling the Egyptian Hall with the story of his ascent of Mont Blanc. His pluck was better than his wind, but his guides managed to haul him up somehow, and he made the most of the mountain marvels he saw, including those St. Bernard members of the Humane Society. Now there is no fear of the dog dying out, for it pays to breed him, and he draws at shows like hunters or shire horses. As the deerhound or wolfhound adorned the baronial hall, the St. Bernard is a noble appendage to any mansion. Not unlike the Newfoundland in shape, look, and coat, he is even more massive and imposing. He may stand over three feet at the shoulder, and the girth of the foreleg, above the elbow, will be more than a foot. Think what strength that implies in an admirably proportioned body !

No dog is more sociable or companionable than the collie. Some thirty years ago he became fashionable in the south : breeders who make money by him have studied his points, and he has multiplied in a beauty approaching perfection. It

may be a question whether he will retain his hereditary qualities when successive generations have had no practice in shepherding. But it is certain that he will never lose his intelligence. His face is full of expression, and there is Scottish shrewdness in the somewhat small eyes, which look as if they had contracted with blinking in the teeth of Highland blizzards. I always think a collie seems out of place in the south, as if he missed his serious occupations and was bored by being a gentleman at leisure. There is a wistful pathos in those eyes of his, when I see him chained in the portico of a club, waiting for his master. Highlander or Borderer, he is out of place on the pavements of Pall Mall, and his ancestors knew nothing of chain or collar. For though popularly supposed to come from the far north, it is only comparatively lately that sheep-walks were introduced in the Highlands, and unquestionably the race originated in the green glens of the Borders. When at home with the shepherds, they said he could do everything but speak, and he could certainly understand spoken language. There are so many well-authenticated stories of his sagacity that we can only believe and wonder. One of the most remarkable is told by the Ettrick Shepherd. One misty evening, in what had once been the forest of Ettrick, 500 of his sheep were missing. Turning to his dog for sympathy, and not dreaming of anything more, he ejaculated despondingly, "Sirrah,

my man, they're a' awa'!" The next moment Sirrah had vanished in the mist. The next morning the 500 had been gathered in, and Sirrah was mounting guard over them. "How he had got them all collected in the dark," says Hogg, "is beyond my comprehension. If all the shepherds in the forest had been there, they could not have effected it with greater propriety." There is another suggestive story where the master of a favourite played off a practical joke on a friend who doubted the dog's gifts. The friend went for a walk, and the dog was ordered to "shepherd him." Shepherded he was to such good purpose, by the great collie jumping up before him and barking in his face, that he was summarily herded back to the house.

Height is no recommendation in a collie, and the most handsome are of medium stature.¹ The small and well-shaped head, with the lofty brain, is that of a thoughtful philosopher, and the ears lying back in the hair of the neck, are cocked on the slightest call to attention. Used to listen for his master's whistle in the hill blasts, the hearing is extraordinarily acute. His sturdy forelegs and his whole body are thickly clothed and heavily feathered against these blasts. Yet the hair on the

¹ I shall venture to differ from Mr. Shand here. I like my collie big. So many collies nowadays are rather weedy. I agree with what Mr. Shand says about the "lofty brain"—though the fanciers scarcely encourage it, their type of collie not being very noble.
—ED.

head, though thick, is short : a very wise provision of Nature, for long locks would seal his eyes with icicles. Like a horse, a good collie is of no particular colour, but for myself I should prefer red or black and tan, and I believe they give the best assurance of blood.

There is another sheep-dog for which I have a great fancy, though I never had the good fortune to own one. I mean what is called the old English sheep-dog. With his grim but honest face, his sturdy, shaggy body and his queer bob-tail, I admire and envy, as I see him trotting at the heels of some veteran of the Downs, who still wears the embroidered, old-fashioned smock frock.

Other big dogs may be passed over. I have said something already of the bulldog : like the mastiff, though often amiable, he is a formidable follower and may be dangerous on occasion. If either bulldog or mastiff goes on the rampage, neither man nor boy can control him. Coming to terriers, the bull-terrier, supposed to be originally a cross between the bulldog and the fox-terrier, is a more manageable animal, though inclined to be quarrelsome. His pluck, as a rule, is undeniable, and like all well-bred terriers, he is a lively companion. Plucky as he is, he is extraordinarily sensitive, and his spirit may be easily broken by rough treatment. He is intelligent enough to understand when he is fairly treated, and to resent harsh punishment for trivial faults. The best bull-terriers may be big

or little ; they may weigh anything from ten to forty pounds. Perhaps the lighter fox-terrier is more in a boy's line, and in the last thirty years he is become amazingly popular. There cannot be the least possible objection to him in a house, for his smooth coat carries little mud. Lighter of make than his bull-brother, he is equally compact of bone and muscle. But there should be nothing coarse about his wiry figure, and the shapely head and stern are significant. I don't know that he is more curious than other terriers, but his light head and his springy action seem the very incarnation of inquisitiveness. He is always hunting the bottom of the hedgerows, and as for vermin, from fox or badger to weasel or water-rat, all are his natural game. That, however, is the speciality of the terrier race, and there is little to choose between them. I have said so much of that, apropos to my own Aberdeens, that there is little to be added. I have a predilection for the Aberdeens, though they have figured little at the shows, because I know their worth, and they are exceedingly handsome. I was looking at a couple last night—one snoring with his chin in the fireplace ; the other, with cocked ears, nodding over him, and waking up again—and I wished I could have evoked the shade of Landseer to paint them. I confess I have never cared much for the Skye : long and low, and enveloped in a woolly fleece, there is the air of sad endurance in his shaggy face, which reminds one of the mists

of the watery Hebrides and the sound of the melancholy ocean. I like the Dandie Dinmont, though his somewhat misshapen head seems out of proportion to the body, but the brain is full of wisdom, and the strong jaws can close like a fox-trap. Bred on the Borders, he was the very dog to bury himself in the fox-earths, to run the hill-fox home to his lair in the rocks, and to worry the litters of cubs which would have grown into formidable enemies to the lambs. As for the Irish terrier, he is comparatively a new discovery, as we know him in England. Rough as a badger, hard as nails, good alike on the dry land and in the morass, he has all the fire of the Celt, with his powers of endurance. As befits a bog-trotting or bog-jumping dog, he is longer in the legs and shorter in the body than his Scottish cousin. The Yorkshire terriers—the Airedales and Bedlingtons—are not unlike the Irish in appearance and qualities, and much the same weight, though more civilised looking. But with any one of the terrier breeds you can hardly go wrong; they are all game and inquisitive, kindly and companionable.

Spaniels, like terriers, are of various sorts. Not to speak of the tiny King Charles, a pampered darling only good for a lapdog, and the brisk little cocker, of long and illustrious descent, they range up to the heavy Clumber. Like terriers, they make capital companions, though as they are silky in their coats, they are more ladylike in their ways. But they are

far from effeminate, though nature never intended them to draw a badger or throttle a fox. They take kindly to petting on the hearthrug, but are never so happy as in the field. It makes the heart glad to see their keenness, shaking the roots of the hedge saplings, or tearing through the thicket of bramble, without the slightest regard to their glossy coats. In the field, perhaps the Clumber is the most useful, though he soon knocks up and must be worked by relays; he is easily trained to hunt within half gunshot. He is not such a cheery dog to shoot over as the merry little beagle or the more excitable terrier, for he does not give tongue. But he has the great recommendation of being staunch and steady. The Clumber is a Frenchman. In the middle of the eighteenth century his ancestors were sent to a Duke of Newcastle at Clumber, as a present from the Grand Huntsman of King Louis XV. The Sussex, on the contrary, as the name implies, is pure English. With shorter legs and as long a body, he is lighter built than the Clumber. He gets more excited over his sport, and throws his tongue, though never vociferous. The colour is dull liver, or a bright golden glow. The Sussex has a shapely head, and his charms are his soft expression, and the beauty of his hazel eyes. I never cared greatly for spaniels myself, but no dogs seem to win more on the affections of their masters. A friend of mine, whether travelling at home or abroad, will never be parted from a

favourite bitch who has reared him many litters of puppies.

I have written at more or less length on the dogs I consider most companionable. But there are others, not so common or not so popular, whose acquaintance is nevertheless worth cultivating. In the way of friendly companionship, there is little to be said for the pointer. It is not his fault, poor beast; he does his own work to perfection, but from time immemorial he has been banished to the kennel and the company of keepers of a single idea. It is different with the setter. He is so handsome, and his face is so full of sympathetic intelligence, that his master could hardly help making friends with him: when the pointer was sent off to the kennel, the setter was invited into the parlour. I have known many setters in the stubbles and on the moors, but there was one of my own to whom I became specially attached. It was a case of love at first sight, and I loved her so much that I was foolish enough to bring her up to London. She was an embarrassing companion in walks in Piccadilly and the Parks. Her beauty drew all eyes, and in the affability of her manners she met the advances of all and sundry. Sometimes she gave introductions to desirable acquaintances: quite as often it was the reverse. Doubtless the dog-stealers were on her track, though I knew it not. One dusky evening she disappeared. Moral: never keep a favourite in London.

If you chance to come across a good otter-hound, which is unlikely, you will be in luck. He comes of the staunch and steady old Southern hound, and has something of the look of his progenitors. With a constitution of iron and a coat like rough Irish frieze, impervious to all weathers, he is the ideal of hardihood. Wise as a Lord Chancellor and solemn as an archbishop, it is only slowly you learn to realise the depths of his wisdom. Hunting the wily otter in scent often drowned by water, has developed his sagacity to the highest pitch. I say it is unlikely you will come across one, for the pure otter-hound has been dying out with the gradual diminution of the otters. And it must be owned that the otter has deserved his doom, for there is no more inveterate or destructive water-poacher.

The dachshund has come into favour of late years, and he was a special favourite of the late Prince Consort. He is a German version of the Border terrier, and with his preternaturally long body and short bandy legs, developed by hereditary scraping, is a quaint-looking little beggar. Like the ant-eater of South Africa, he seems built for burrowing, and as *dachs* is German for badger, he doubtless got his name from his feats in the badger-holes. He is constantly to be seen at the heels of keepers in the great German woods, but now is generally used like our spaniels for hunting the coverts, and especially in roe drives. The dachshund is susceptible, and though game to the

backbone, is troubled with nerves. If you take him out hunting, he is extremely independent, slow to answer to the whistle and resentful of the whip. His high spirit is easily cowed, and then he sulks. And if too highly fed, with insufficient exercise, he is apt to get savage like a mastiff on chain.





CHAPTER III

DOG DISEASES AND THEIR CURES

THE worst of getting attached to a favourite dog is that he is short-lived at the best, and his loss can only be a question of brief time. Moreover, it is provoking to know that dogs take no sort of care of themselves—they will lie out in the wet and cold—and they are liable to many unexpected ailments. For example, they catch lung complaints in damp and draughts, and not a few fall victims to consumption. Unless the case is obviously simple, when you see that something is wrong, the best way is to consult a good doctor. But that is not always easy to find; and especially in country districts, the vet, who may be a capable horse or

cattle doctor, looks down upon dogs, and often knows little about them. If you live in the town, where favourite dogs are always ailing, there should be no difficulty in getting good advice. If you live in the country, there is pretty sure to be some one trustworthy within reach—an experienced keeper with a kennel, or a sporting farmer who keeps greyhounds, and may be safely trusted for simple diseases.

As I have said repeatedly, there are long odds against the unlucky dogs who are confined in town. The chances are all in favour in every way of the country dogs, who have fresh air and exercise and the free range of the fields. Instinct teaches them to doctor themselves ; when out of sorts, they go in for herbs and grasses, which cool the blood and keep the stomach in tone. So many a serious complaint is averted. But there is one trouble of puppyhood which you must count with, and that is distemper. There is still a popular belief that all dogs must face the ordeal, but that is a delusion, though comparatively few escape it. Sometimes it is taken very mildly, so much so that it may pass for an ordinary cold. Mild or severe, it must run its course, though it will be mitigated or relieved by prompt treatment. Dr. Gordon Stables, an expert on dogs and their diseases, says it is really a fever resulting from blood poisoning. So, till the dog has attained his full growth, the moral is that you should look out sharp for any signs of it. He may have it later

all the same, but then I think he has more strength to resist it, and will pull through when otherwise he would have given in. Distemper is not unlike influenza—indeed one form of it is so defined—in its symptoms, its course, and its consequences. When a bad case, it is lowering, emaciating, and depressing, and if the patient does recover, he is apt to suffer from those consequences. Chorea or St. Vitus's dance is one of the most common of them. I have a Scotch terrier now, with an original constitution of iron and extraordinarily strongly built. He caught something like distemper when two years old ; distemper it must have been, but there were none of the warning symptoms, and he was treated too late. The strength of his constitution served to fight it off, but he recovered to be victimised by chorea. For months he went through a course of contortions, and his moanings were painful to hear. I thought seriously of putting him out of his misery, but while there is life there is hope, and I knew the strength of his constitution. Now, though there is constant twitching of the hind legs, especially when sleeping, he seems as happy as any dog need care to be. Gradually the tucked-in tail went up as his loins regained much of their old elasticity, and when he hunts the fields or the hedges, you would never know there was anything the matter. I quote him to show that one need never despair, and also to show that there are limits to a dog's intelligence. Preternaturally sagacious and objecting to pain,

he has never learned anything by experience. I believe he caught the disease by lying panting in the blazing sun through a sultry summer, but that may have been excusable, because he was young and foolish. Now, however, he should know that lying out in cold is the worst thing possible for him, and yet in the most bitter days of the winter, though wind and snow touch him up immediately, there is no keeping him in the house.

The first ordinary symptom of distemper is one you should easily discover in a house dog—he loses appetite. Then his nose is hot ; he is always running to the drinking-trough ; he loses spirit, and is dull and languid. The cheeks begin to shrink and the face has a pinched expression. He is either costive or has a touch of diarrhoea. Then there will be a discharge from the eyes and nose, first watery and afterwards mattery. When you first suspect distemper, it is always safe to give a dose of castor-oil—a dessert-spoonful or a table-spoonful, according to size. If that does not give relief and bring back his appetite, call in advice. In any case, when he does take to his food again he must be strictly dieted, and the food must be light and nourishing. Bovril and beef-tea are good. He should be kept scrupulously clean in a warm room, well ventilated, and the discharge from eyes and nostrils should be sponged away at intervals. Dr. Stables recommends dissolving some chlorate or nitrate of potash in the water, and prescribes the following fever mixture, to be

given three times a day in barley water : " Of spirits of ether, from 30 to 120 drops, according to size ; of antimonial lime, from 3 to 40 drops," which last, by the way, seems rather a broad margin.

With inflammation of the bowels the poor animal looks deplorably dejected ; no wonder, for he is in great pain, and when the attack is acute his moans are pitiful. The remedy is doses of opiates, but these should be regulated by a doctor. Dogs on the chain, or in confinement, suffer frequently from constipation ; laxative medicines give only temporary relief. The remedy is plenty of exercise when possible, with farinaceous food. If the dog has the run of the country, he will doctor himself ; you will see him greedily devouring grasses. Diarrhoea is generally a consequence of cold or exposure to damp. Chalk mixture with laudanum or a few drops of chlorodyne three or four times a day are recommended, and again the food should be farinaceous. Of chorea I have already spoken. It is almost invariably the result of distemper. It is not often, perhaps, that one is so fortunate as I was in saving a favourite from a bad attack. If the dog is young and the whole body is badly affected, the kindest thing is to destroy him at once ; but that is always a question which one is slow to settle. When that dog of mine developed the disease, I wrote to consult one of the greatest living authorities, who makes large sums by his kennel. He recommended good

living, fresh air, massage, and warm baths. As for results he would hazard no prediction. But he said that the year before he had two cases in his kennels. In one, which seemed comparatively slight, the victim became a hopeless cripple, and was destroyed; in the more serious case the patient recovered, to take first honours on a show bench at the Crystal Palace.

Consumption, as I said, is far from uncommon; it is likely to make progress before it is suspected, and is really incurable. It begins with a cough, but there are no signs of fever; the victim gradually wastes away, and in time there is habitual diarrhoea, with internal bleeding from the rupture of blood-vessels. Cod-liver oil may be tried, but it only alleviates the symptoms and defers the end. When the disease has got firm hold, it is kindness to put an end to the sufferer. Inflammation of the lungs, though not necessarily so deadly, is very dangerous. The signs are fever, with dry nose and inflamed eyes; the dog is labouring hard for breath. The best thing to do is immediately to take advice. If that cannot be done, the treatment recommended is a warm bed in a well-ventilated room, light and nourishing diet, fomentations of hot turpentine, with quinine and cod-liver oil when the dog is in way of recovery. The treatment to be begun with a dose of three parts castor-oil, two parts syrup of buckthorn, and a sixth, syrup of poppies.

Worms are, unfortunately, very common; they attack dogs universally, whether well or ill cared for,

and are especially fatal to puppies. They are either the round worm or the tapeworm. The former is like the common earth-worm, and from four to eight inches in length. There are several species of the tapeworm, and one of them is sometimes yards long. It may be imagined what horrible pests they are, when they knit themselves together and intertwine with the bowels. Sometimes they crawl into the stomach, causing violent vomiting, and thence into the lungs and nostrils. With young dogs especially they may be feared, and should be anxiously looked for. The symptoms are a staring coat, emaciation, notwithstanding a ravenous appetite, low spirits, a hot nose, and an offensive breath. The excrements are frequent, but scanty, and there is an occasional discharge of mucus. If you dose the dog with a strong aperient—a risky treatment if he is weak—you will see what worms he is troubled with. But all treatment is more or less hazardous, for the medicines that destroy the worms are poisons or irritants which affect his health. Some authorities say that the areca nut is harmless, and it is certainly the most innocuous. The doze of grated areca is two grains for each pound of the dog's weight. Cleanliness, with good food, are the surest preventives, but the most dainty dogs will swallow the foulest garbage, and there is no guarding against that.

Skin diseases are troublesome and apt to become loathsome. It would be idle and endless to enter

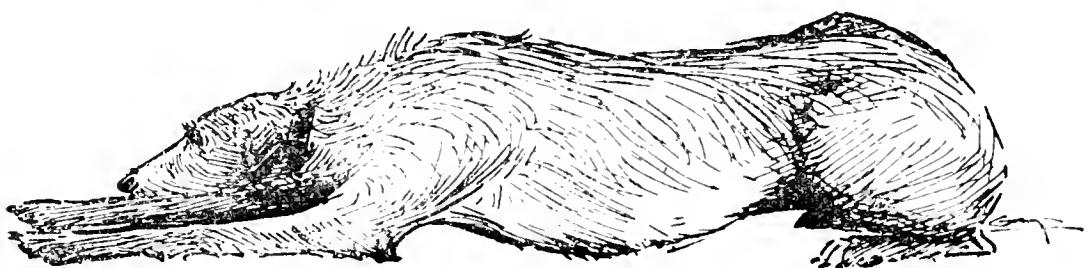
on the many forms they take, for they show themselves offensively enough, and much the same treatment applies to all. There, too, cleanliness and wholesome feeding are the safeguards, but they may be caught by contagion in low company, and sometimes they come more mysteriously. The first thing is thorough washing in warm water with dog-soap. If the patient is visibly out of sorts, he should have a mild aperient. After each washing an ointment is to be well rubbed in—sulphur, four ounces to an ounce of spirit of turpentine, to be used every second day, will generally succeed. A more potent dressing is green iodide of mercury, two drachms made up with two ounces of lard; but, as the iodide is strong poison, the dog must be muzzled to prevent licking. Even with the sulphur ointment, to guard against the licking, it is well to have an infusion of bitter aloe.

Canker of the ear comes generally of overfeeding or rough exposure. The trouble is that the dog *will* shake, and covering the ears with a cap increases the internal inflammation. He must have opening medicine, and be carefully dieted. Then nitrate of silver wash or sulphate of zinc should be dropped into the ear-passage every two or three days, changing from the one to the other. The external sores should be touched daily with caustic.¹

¹ Canker in dogs, as I know from experience, is a cruel disease. Immediately you discover or suspect it by the way in which the dog shakes its head, go to a good veterinary. Taken in time it is curable: neglected it becomes chronic.—ED.

A dog bite is always an unpleasant thing, less from the pain, which is little, than from the subsequent anxiety. The odds are so great against there being serious danger of hydrophobia, that it is never worth while worrying. Sir Henry Smith, quoting medical experts, shows that even in tropical India the chances are inappreciable. The very name "hydrophobia" shows how little our ancestors knew about the matter. Should there be rabies, or the fevered condition of some poor brute that is mistaken for it, when he is tied up, far from shrinking from water, he eagerly seeks for it, in unquenchable thirst. If left to himself, in place of bolting ahead through the country, his inclination is to curl up and sulk in some dark corner. In place of being specially affected in the dog-days, attacks of the sort are more common in the spring, and if not bullied and hunted into unwelcome exertion, there is nothing like such frothing of the mouth as in the cases of epilepsy or ordinary sickness. Never have a dog shot that has bitten you. In the first place, very likely it was merely a pardonable ebullition of temper; but if he were really mad, the rabies may not develop for weeks or months, and so you are left in anxiety. Undoubtedly the safer course is to have the bite immediately cauterised. Personally—and I have been occasionally bitten by friends, casual acquaintances, and entire strangers—I have never had recourse to such heroic measures. Sucking, encouraging the bleeding, and carefully washing the

wound, are the simple remedies with which I have been satisfied. At the same time, there *is* a certain risk, and there have been well-authenticated cases of hydrophobia. One of the best authenticated, and the most dramatically told in all its details, is that of the Colonel Lennox who fought the Duke of York—the Duke of Richmond of the memorable Brussels ball. His Grace, when Governor of Canada, was bitten by a tame fox chained in the barrack-yard at Montreal. A month afterwards he died in great agony ; for some time there were no symptoms of any kind, but then serious warnings caused grave uneasiness, the most ominous being the unconquerable aversion to crossing water. The Duke was on a tour, and on some pretext he would make a détour rather than leap his horse over the smallest grip or rivulet.



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